




Keyboard FUNdamentals

Ruth Cahn & Laurie Russell


“MALLET’S LET’S GO!”

While you are waiting for the session to begin, please read the following and mark your positive responses to the questions. By identifying your learning style, we can help you learn mallets more easily.


Visual

1. I learn best by seeing something demonstrated. 


Aural

2. I learn best by listening. 

Body Movement
(Kinesthetic)

3. I learn best by doing. 


Verbal

4. I learn best by having things explained to me in words or reading about it. 

Mathematical

5. I am good at math and like patterns, comparing things, etc. 

Internal

6. I learn best when I work by myself with a teacher. 

External

7. I learn best when I am with a group with a teacher/leader. 



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“MALLET’S LET’S GO!” Learning the Marimba

Introduction of Presenters with brief description of how we began our personal marimba studies.

The Questionnaire you have received and completed is based on work done by Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University, who has developed the “Theory of Multiple Intelligences” to help identify our personal learning/thinking style. By identifying and incorporating these “intelligences” we can learn and teach the marimba with greater ease and success.

Let’s Get Started:

1. **Body Movement** learners (with Laurie)

- use feet to find the notes on the Wenger footNOTES™
 - demonstrate the importance of foot position when playing the “regular ” marimba
- At home: can you demonstrate marimba foot positions?

2. **Mathematical** learners (with Ruth)

- use numbers to find sounds on the keyboard
 - find sounds by “playing” their telephone numbers
 - do patterns and sequencing by the numbers
- At home: can you create some patterns using numbers from 1–8?

3. **Visual** learners (with Laurie)

- find and play notes on the marimba by visual association
 - play rhythms on notes they have found
 - combine notes and rhythms in a simple song
- At home: can you find these notes on the keyboard: F, C, A, D, G, E, B?

4. **Verbal** learners (with Ruth)

- associate alphabetic note names with note locations on the keyboard
 - find words on the keyboard (bed, fad, gag, deed, etc.)
 - make a word tune (group 1: gag add, group 2: bad dad)
- At home: can you find any other words on the keyboard?



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5. Aural learners (with Laurie)

- do “Suzuki” marimba learning by listening and doing
- play the musical scale
- play a folksong by listening

At home: can you sing a favorite folksong and then play it on a keyboard?

CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR GOOD MARIMBA LEARNING

1. About lessons:

group lessons for external learners
private lessons for internal learners
finding a teacher

2. About practicing:

how to find an instrument
how much time should I practice

3. About sticks:

marimba stick choices (Laurie)
xylophone and bell stick choices (Ruth)

THE “BIG FOUR”:

Reading Music, Playing from Memory, Listening for Inspiration, and Improvisation

1. Techniques to improve your reading skill on the marimba. (Ruth)

- a. students who currently read “notes”
- b. students who are new to “note” reading

2. Tips on playing from memory. (Laurie)

3. Listening to great players for inspiration.

You should hear performances or CDs by some of the following great performers: Leigh Howard Stevens, Keiko Abe, Gordon Stout, Michael Burritt, Nexus, Bob Becker, Robert Van Sice, Arthur Lipner, David Samuels, David Friedman, Michael Udow, Nancy Zeltsman, Linda Maxey, George Hamilton Green, Terry Gibbs, Emil Richards, Mike Mainieri are just a few initial suggestions with many more artists for you to discover.

4. A few words about improvisation: “Just Do It”!



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Suggestions for Beginning Mallet Methods:

Mallet Percussion for Young Beginners by Randy Eyles, pub. Meredith
(excellent for beginning readers and players)

Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba and Vibraphone by Morris Goldenberg,
pub. Chappell and Company
(very complete method for a “reader”—beginning to advanced)

Elementary Studies by George Hamilton Green, pub. Meredith
(great for students who need to learn note reading)

Music for Marimba, Vol. 1 by Art Joliff, pub. Rubank
(very easy duets and easy access to 3 mallet technique)

Percussion Keyboard Technique by Thomas McMillan, pub. ProArt
(good for students who already read; filled with music by great composers)

Primary Handbook for Mallets by Garwood Whaley, pub. Meredith
(comprehensive, nice variety of classical and folk repertoire)

Glossary of keyboard percussion terms

bars—the vibrating medium that produces the tone, the surface that is struck to produce the tone (also called keys or keyboard)

bells/glockenspiel—metallic keyboard instrument used frequently in ensembles, produces a high, intensive, ringing sound. Sounds 2 octaves higher than written. Generally played with a very hard stick.

chimes—or tubular bells are metals tubes that are struck only on the cap at the top of the tube. They have a pedal that is used to control the length of “ring.” Played with rawhide, plastic and wooden beaters that look like hammers.

grip—the manner of holding the sticks. It is very common today to also play keyboard instruments holding 4 (or more) sticks. There are many ways to hold multiple mallets.

mallets—sticks used in playing keyboard percussion. Many varieties are available.

marimba—wooden keyed instrument that produces a warm and ringing tone. Marimbas come in many sizes and price ranges. They are played with sticks made of yarn, latex, rubber, cord etc. The marimba sounds as written.



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node—area of the bar where the cord passes through the bar. This is an area of limited vibration that we try to avoid striking.

octave—the closest distance between two “notes” with the same name; there are eight scale notes between these, if you count the beginning and ending notes.

resonator—tubes that are underneath the instrument used to reinforce the sound.

scales—the arrangement of notes that constitute the familiar “do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do.” Great for practice.

xylophone—a wooden keyed instrument that is frequently used in ensembles. It has a high, powerful sound and can “cut” through the sound of a large group. Generally played with sticks of very hard rubber. It sounds an octave higher than written.

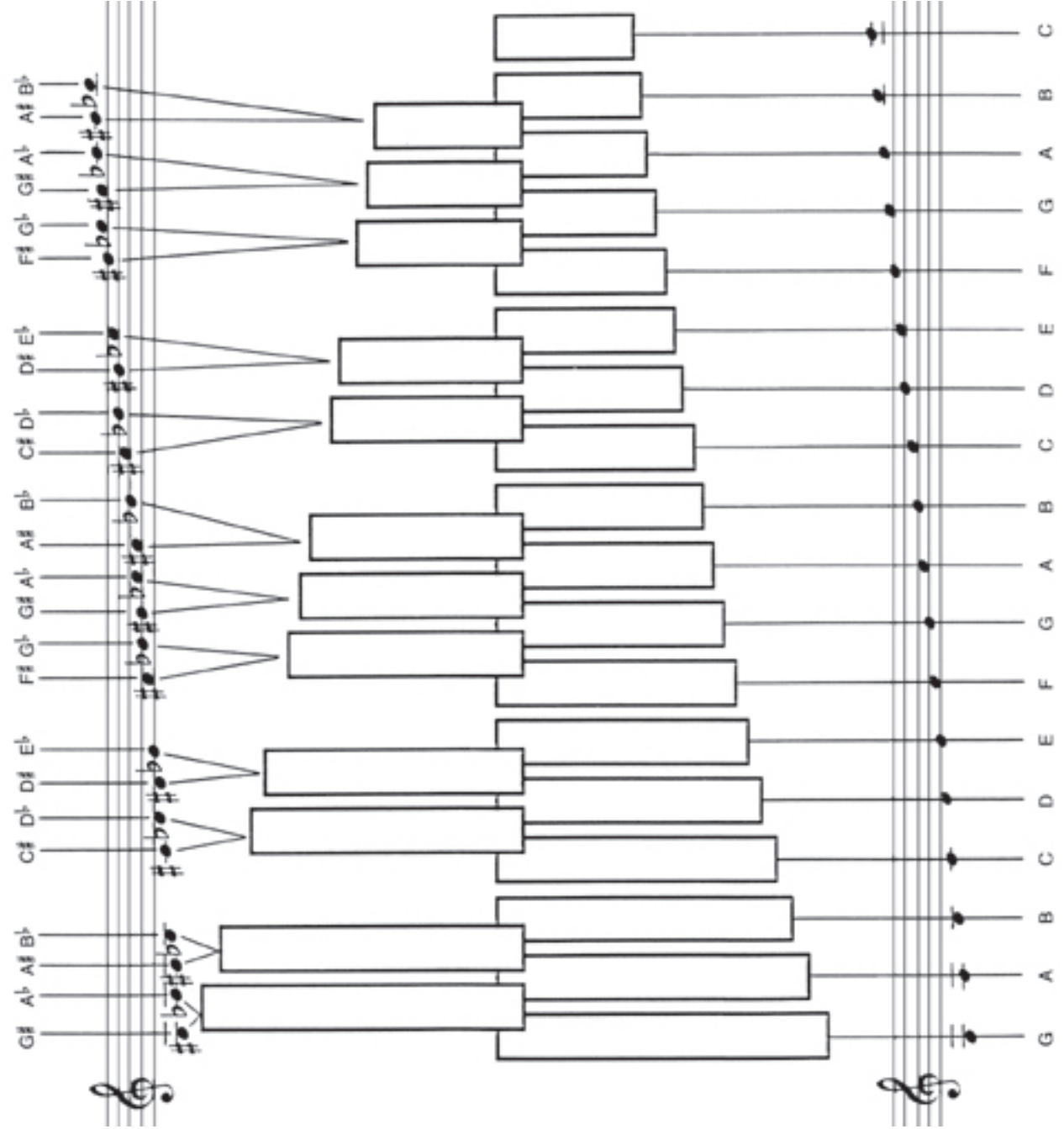
vibraphone—metal keyed instrument that has a pedal to control the amount of “ring” and phrasing. Inside each resonator is a small fan that turns and produces the characteristic vibe sound called vibrato. Played with yarn or cord-wound mallets. Vibes sound as written.



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Learn the Keyboard



Accidentals

Naturals