



Essential Elements for Two-Mallet Playing

by Lisa Rogers

I've found through my years of teaching and performing that the two essential elements or "top of the pyramid" for good mallet playing are **Accuracy & Efficiency**. I believe efficiency of motion directly affects pitch accuracy and sound production on any mallet instrument. Other building blocks holding the pyramid in place are STANCE, BODY POSITION, GRIP, and STROKE. The following tips have helped improve my A&E.

STANCE

Feet almost shoulder width apart and move side to side with the instrument.

Avoid taking too many steps as you move throughout the range of the instrument. Too many steps tend to shift your center of gravity and compromise accuracy.

BODY POSITION

If your instrument is height adjustable, please adjust the instrument in the same way you would adjust your snare stand. If the instrument is not height adjustable, place blocks of wood underneath to raise slightly or build a wooden platform to stand on while playing.

If you are having trouble reading music, adjust the music stand. Don't adjust your body closer to or further away from the instrument resulting in poor or uneven sound production.

GRIP

Two-mallet grip should be similar to snare drum grip; however, make sure the mallets fit almost in the groove of each palm or slightly offside. This placement will allow the mallets and wrists to move in up and down motions efficiently and contact the bars accurately.

Every pair of mallets has an ideal balance point (where the mallets will rebound the most). Even though the bars of a mallet instrument don't rebound like the batter head of a snare drum when struck, the balance of a mallet is extremely important for efficiency of motion. Test the rebound capabilities of your mallets on a drum pad or snare drum. Position your fulcrum (thumb and first finger grip) at various points along the mallet. Then, drop with a weighted wrist motion and check the number of rebounds. When you find the ideal balance point, you have also found where your fulcrum should be placed on the mallet.

STROKE

I try to think one stroke per wrist motion. As I strike a bar, I follow through and return to my starting point in preparation for striking the next bar. I don't strike the bar, then stop, and lift again as preparation for the next stroke resulting in two motions.

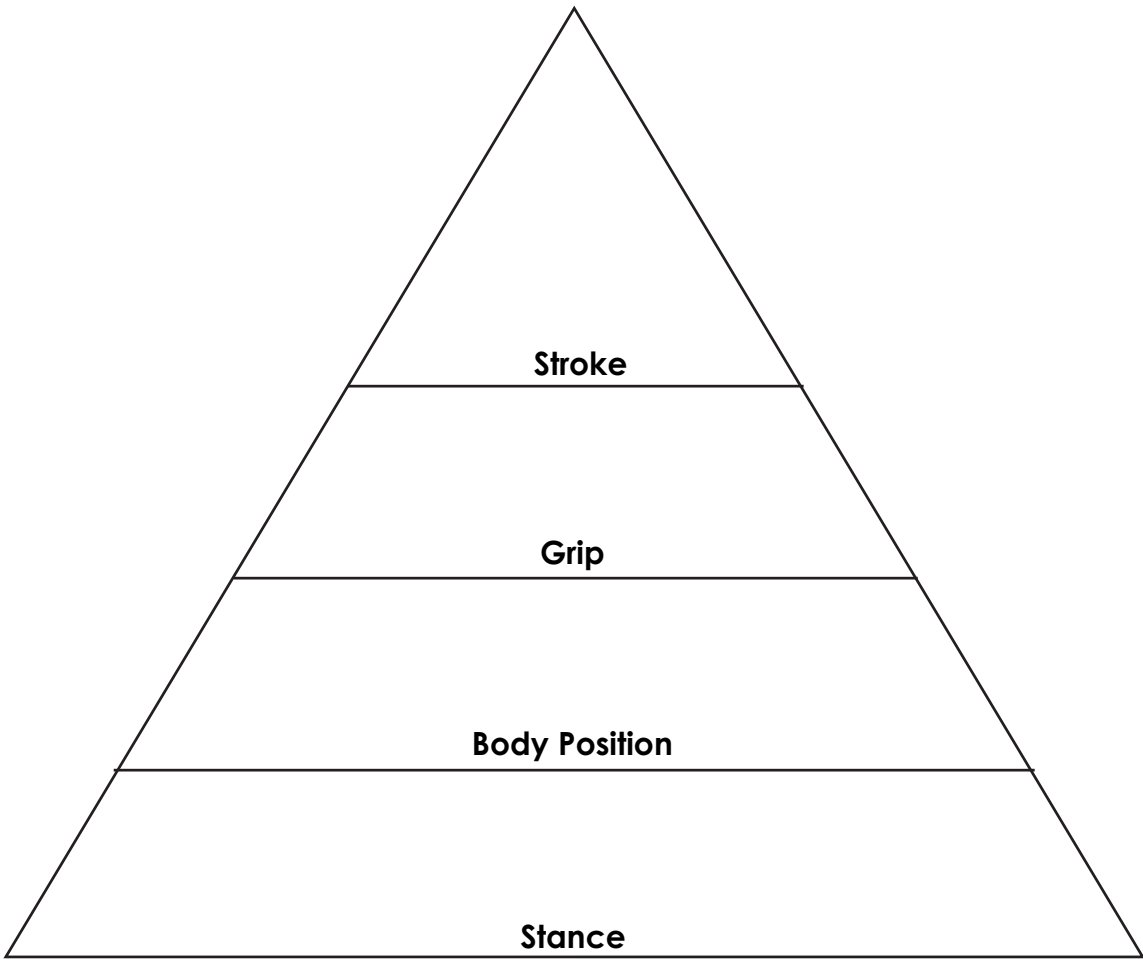
A&E

Stroke

Grip

Body Position

Stance



LITERATURE SUGGESTIONS TO BUILD A&E FOR THE TWO-MALLET PLAYER

Methods

- A. *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, & Vibraphone*-Morris Goldenberg (M-D)
- B. *Instruction Course for Xylophone*-George H. Green (M-D)
- C. *New Elementary Studies*-George H. Green (E-MD)
- D. *Fundamental Method for Mallets*-Mitchell Peters (E-MD)
- E. *Fundamental Studies for Mallets*-Garwood Whaley (E-MD)
- F. *Primary Handbook for Mallets*-Garwood Whaley (E-MD)

Solo Literature

Marimba

1. *Etude 1955*-E. Hatch
2. *Furioso and Valse*-E. Hatch
3. *Extra Spices, Please*-J. Gottry
4. *Etude in A-flat Major*-C. Musser
5. *Sonata-Allegro*-M. Peters
6. *Two Archaic Dances*-A. Russell
7. *Tempest*-T. Ukena

Vibraphone

1. *Joey's Song*-D. Mancini
2. *Five Pieces*-J. Metzger
3. *European Gallery*-B. Molenhof
4. *Funny Vibraphone*-N. Zivkovic

Xylophone

1. Rags and Novelty Pieces by George Hamilton Green and Harry Breuer (i. e. *Triplets, Bit O' Rhythm, 1908 Rag, Jovial Jasper, The Whistler*)
2. *Fantasy on Japanese Woodprints*-A. Hovhaness
Carnival of Venice Fantasy-L. Maxey, *Concertino for Xylophone*-T. Mayuzumi

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me:

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