

About the Tambourine

by Neil Grover &
Garwood Whaley

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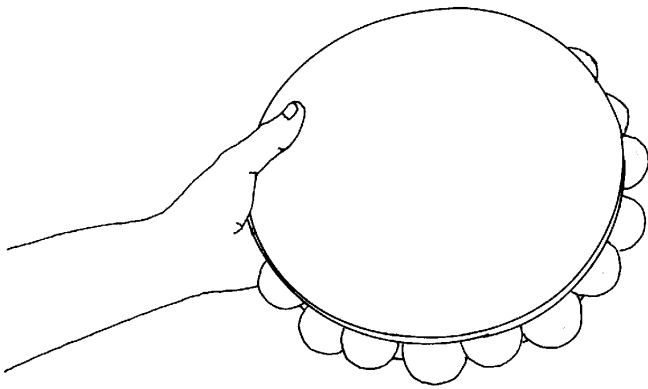
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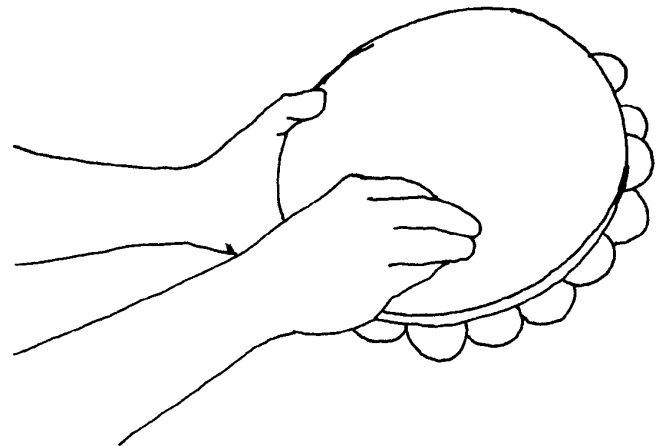
Performance

Holding the instrument properly is the first step in developing acceptable performance technique. A good tambourine will have a grip area usually with a hole for mounting the instrument on a stand when playing multiple-percussion parts. Although the mounting hole is sometimes referred to as the "thumb hole," it is not intending for finger placement. Grip the tambourine firmly but not too tight since it must be free to vibrate when struck. Holding the instrument too tightly will inhibit the jingles from moving and consequently choke the sound.



playing softly, play near the edge. For louder dynamics, move toward the center. It is important to experiment to find the best playing area for each individual instrument.

Begin playing with the tambourine held parallel to the floor (horizontal orientation) striking the instrument slowly. As you play, slowly angle the tambourine up until it is perpendicular to the floor (vertical orientation). You'll notice that the sonority of the tambourine has changed from "dry" to "wet." Changes in orientation can be used to enhance articulation or jingle resonance. For most playing situations, the tambourine should be held at an orientation half way between horizontal and vertical.



¹ Geiringer, Karl. Musical Instruments. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1965.

² Peinkofer, Karl and Tannigel, Fritz. Handbook of Percussion Instruments. Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1969.

Thumb Rolls

by Neil Grover &
Garwood Whaley

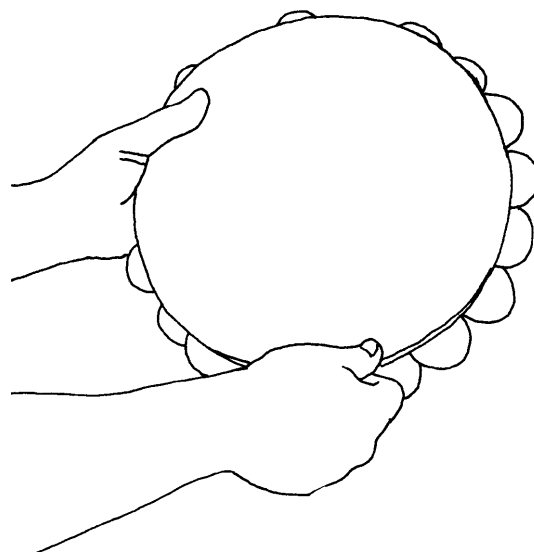
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This study introduces thumb rolls which are executed by rubbing the thumb of the striking hand around the circumference of the tambourine head. The following will help:

- Bend your thumb back as far as is comfortable.
- Make sure that your thumb points in the direction of movement (think of your thumb as a car always pointed in a forward motion).
- Using the fleshy part of the thumb, apply a light yet consistent pressure against the head-do not push too hard.
- Moisten your thumb with your tongue in order to create friction between your thumb and the head. Friction is the necessary component for playing a thumb roll.



Fist/Knee Technique

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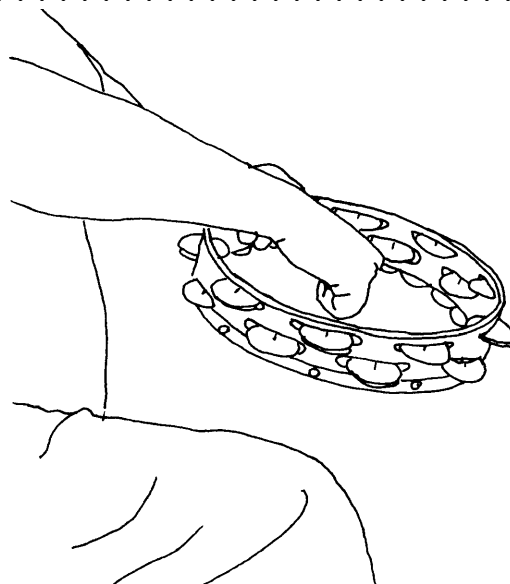
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The fist/knee technique is used when executing rapid articulations. While standing, elevate your leg by placing your foot on a stool or chair (your elevated thigh should be approximately parallel to the floor). If you hold the tambourine in your left hand, use your right knee and vice versa. Hold the tambourine upside down with the head facing the floor. Create a "sandwich" of knee, 6 inches of air, tambourine, 6 inches of air and then your fist. Keeping the knee and fist stationary, make an up and down motion using the arm to alternate the tambourine between hitting your fist and your knee. All motion is controlled with the arm, not the wrist. This technique is the only time you should grip the tambourine very firmly while keeping a stiff wrist.



Fast

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