

First Day of Class

Snare Drum

Assembling the Instrument

- 1) Have students take instrument cases to another area of the room and set their cases flat on a table. If no table is available, students should put cases on the floor and kneel beside their instruments.
- 2) At this time remind students that they must follow instructions step by step. Do not allow students to proceed on their own.
- 3) The cases should be opened with the handle *below* the opening.
- 4) Students then remove practice pads and stands from the case and assemble them.
- 5) Students should take their and practice pad to their assigned “spot” and stand to wait for the class to begin. Do not allow students to play indiscriminately on the practice pad (this is especially tempting for percussion players). Do not allow students to wander around the room.

Holding the Sticks

- 1) Before beginning to play the correct playing position and practice pad height must be determined for each student. This is done by having each student place her/his stick on the playing area (the playing area is slightly above the center of the pad) making sure that the elbows are slightly forward or even with the sides of the body. This puts the student the correct distance from the practice pad. The pad height is determined by adjusting the pad so that the forearms are almost parallel to the floor (a slight downward angle is acceptable).
- 2) After determining the playing position students should be instructed to stand up tall with feet shoulder width apart and both feet flat on the floor.
- 3) Next, have students grip the sticks, palms up, between the thumb and first joint of the index finger. The remaining fingers gently fold around the back of the stick. Hands should be placed slightly less than 1/3 down from the butt end of the stick. When this has been accomplished the students can then turn their hands over so the back of the hand is facing up.
- 4) Remind the students that it is the *thumb* and *index finger* that actually grip the stick. The other three fingers are used to help control the stick, *never* to grip.

The Stroke

- 1) Individually have each student try one stroke with the right hand making sure that the motion is made primarily with the wrist and the motion is a straight up and down not a side to side. The tip of the stick should make contact with the head of the practice pad just off of the center. Students should use a full stroke bringing the tip of the stick a full 9 inches above the drum head.
- 2) It is very important that students think of getting the tip of the stick off the head as quickly as possible (this is done with a quick wrist motion) and that the sound is pulled out of the instrument not “beaten” into the instrument.
- 2) Work with each student individually to make sure that he/she is executing the stroke correctly with the right hand.
- 3) Repeat the same procedure with left hand.
- 4) After students are able to play single strokes with the correct grip and motion have students play repeated quarter notes with each hand. Do not alternate the sticking. Concentrate on one hand at a time. It is important to ***maintain a steady pulse for the student at all times.***
- 5) Students should remain standing throughout the entire lesson without roaming.
- 6) Impress on the students that although these exercises may seem easy, playing with the correct position and stroke along with lots of repetition is necessary if each student is going to develop the coordination and strength needed to be successful.
- 7) ***Constant*** and ***consistent*** reinforcement of these fundamentals at each class session is necessary if students are to develop proper playing fundamentals.

Disassembling the Instrument

- 1) When the class has ended ask the students to return quietly to their instrument cases.
- 3) Students should carefully take the pad and stand apart and replace it in the the instrument case.
- 4) The cases can now be closed and latched. Do not allow students to put music or books in their cases as anything extra in the case will damage the instrument.

Extra Considerations Snare Drum

- 1) Insist that all of your percussion purchase the **same** high quality oak stick: either Pro Mark 2B or Vic Firth general.
- 2) Insist that beginning students rent or purchase a drum kit that includes a practice pad on an adjustable stand and a set of high quality bells.
- 3) Matched grip has the advantage of transferring to all of the other percussion instruments and is currently advocated by most professionals in the profession.
- 4) Quarters can be placed on the backs of the hands to help maintain proper playing position.
- 5) While insisting that percussion stand with feet together while performing may seem a little extreme, it does help to define a good playing position and keeps players from roaming.
- 6) Percussionists must learn to play both snare drum and mallets. This can be done several different ways:
 - a) The first lesson is divided into two segments with half of the time spent on snare and half of the lesson on mallets.
 - b) The first lesson is entirely mallets and the second lesson is entirely snare. Lessons are alternated this way throughout the school year.
 - c) The first two or three months are entirely mallets. Once good concepts of mallet playing have been established, the snare (practice pad) is introduced.
- 7) Always refer to your percussion players as percussionist not as drummers.