

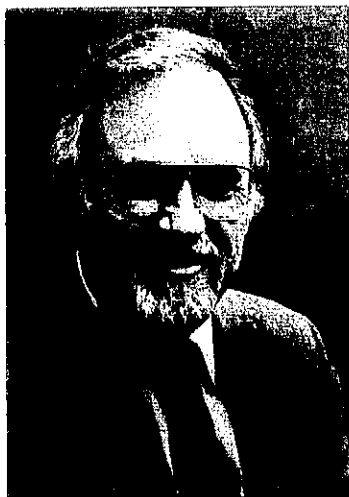
THE PERFORMING PERCUSSIONIST

SERIES

Book II

JAMES COFFIN

Dedicated to
those who gave me encouragement...
and to you who said "get it done".



James Coffin is Percussion Marketing Manager for Yamaha Musical Products. He was formerly assistant professor of music at the University of Northern Iowa where he received his bachelor and master of arts degrees. There he served as professor of percussion and coordinator of jazz studies. Additionally, he directed the nationally acclaimed University jazz band.

PREFACE

Being a percussionist is exciting. As a member of the percussion section, you add the color, the zest and the fire to musical compositions. Also, you are a soloist - an individualist. There is usually just one cymbal player, one timpanist, one bass drummer, one triangle player, etc. As the band crescendos to a thrilling climax, all eyes are upon you as you build a timpani roll, or as you set and deliver a perfect cymbal crash. If the wind section is the meat and potatoes, then the percussion section is the salt and pepper. Without the seasoning, the musical fare would be very bland.

Three key words associated with outstanding percussion performance are: **TECHNIQUE, IMAGINATION and CONCENTRATION.**

The dictionary refers to technique as "the method....essential to expertness of execution in any art....". A percussionist acquires the needed technique through studies designed to develop speed, stamina and accuracy. However, in order to be musical, technique must be combined with imagination.

Through the use of imagination, the musical percussionist selects the proper stick or mallet, determines the correct striking area, plays with taste and is stylistically correct. Imagination dictates that the performer will constantly be seeking new ways to produce a musical percussive sound.

Concentration is the combining of technique and imagination into a faultless performance. Whether in rehearsal, performing a solo or playing in a group concert, the percussionist must give exclusive attention to the performance of the music.

So, by developing your technique, stretching your imagination and always concentrating, you can become an exciting performing percussionist.

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New

TUNING THE SNARE DRUM

Throughout the Performing Percussionist Series, reference has been made to listen to your sound. That sound, of course, is a combination of many things -- type of sticks used, your ability to strike the drum correctly, and finally the sound or tone of the drum. Constant tuning is necessary to insure that the instrument is properly tuned and producing a crisp, projecting snare drum tone.

A. TUNING THE HEADS:

1. The heads must be in tune with themselves. To achieve this, release the snares and with a mallet tap 3" in from each tension rod until the pitch is the same at all points. Follow this procedure on both the batter (top) head and the snare (bottom) head.
2. Using quarter turns, tension the batter head until you can barely indent the center with your thumb. Push the center of the head with the heel of your hand. Then loosen the head until, when pushing in the center with your thumb, the head will depress about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
3. The pitch of the snare head must be at least a minor third higher than the pitch of the batter head. Even though higher in pitch, the snare head will not feel as taut because it is not as thick as the batter head.

B. ADJUSTING THE SNARES:

1. Put the snares on and using the tension knob(s), completely loosen the snares.
2. Gradually tighten the snares until they touch the head, occasionally tapping the center of the drum with a stick.
3. Continue to tighten a few more turns until the snares stop buzzing.
4. Strike the drum with a full stroke to check that the snares do not buzz when the drum is played loudly. If they do, a minor adjustment is needed.

IMPORTANT -- most young percussionists have a tendency to have the heads too loose and the snares too tight. Follow the instructions carefully and remember, if you adjust the batter head you must likewise retension the snare head. If you use the internal tone control, make sure that the felt strip is barely touching the head.

Constant checking of the grip is very important. Before study is begun in the second book of THE PERFORMING PERCUSSIONIST check over the grip again, using the following pictures.

The Traditional Grip

The top view of the traditional grip, as viewed by the student, is seen in Fig. 1.

Right Hand

Fig. 2 shows the side view of the right hand. Note that the stick is gripped by the thumb and first joint of the index finger. The stick rests on the fleshy pads of the curled second and third fingers. The little finger may either touch the stick or rest just off the stick. The student should think of the stick as being an extension of the arm, Fig. 3. However, the butt end of the stick may rest on the heel of the hand, Fig. 4. Fig. 5 shows the side view of the right stick at the top of the stroke. Notice that the fingers are still on the stick. The top of the stroke, overhead view, is seen in Fig. 6. The student should be able to see the knuckles of the fingers, not the thumb nail.

Left Hand

Fig. 7 shows that the left stick is gripped in the crotch between the thumb and index finger while resting on the first joint of the third finger. Both the thumb and the index finger rest lightly on the stick. The second finger is pulled away from the stick. The third and little fingers are curved naturally under the stick. Fig. 8 shows the left hand grip as seen by the student. When rebounding, the third and little fingers pull back from the stick, Fig. 9, the stick bounces, and then is caught by the same fingers, Fig. 7. The top of the left stick stroke as viewed by the student, is shown in Fig. 10.

Fig. 1

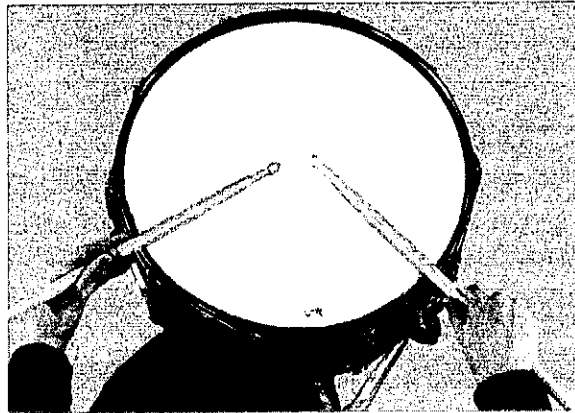


Fig. 2

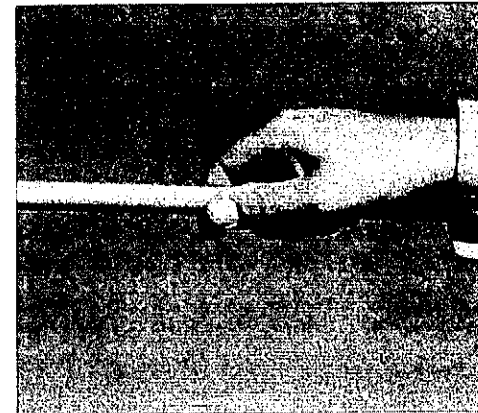


Fig. 3

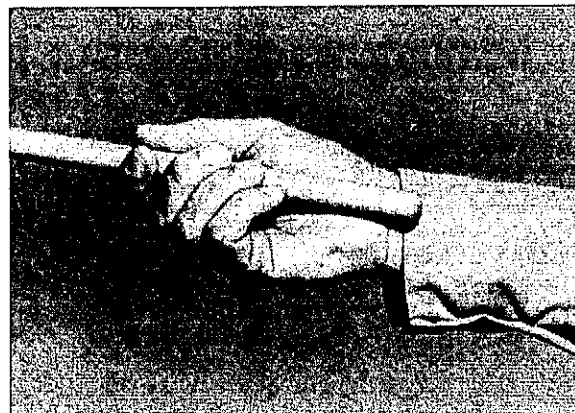


Fig. 4

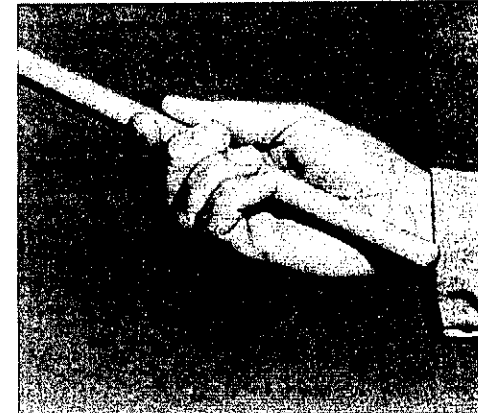


Fig. 5

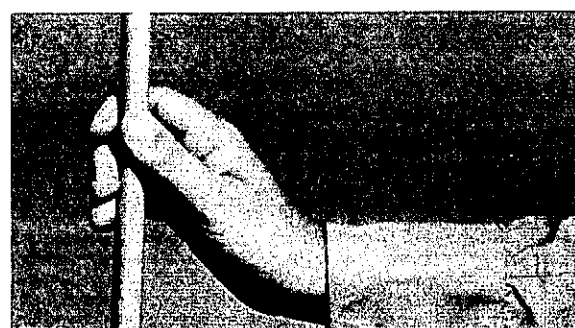
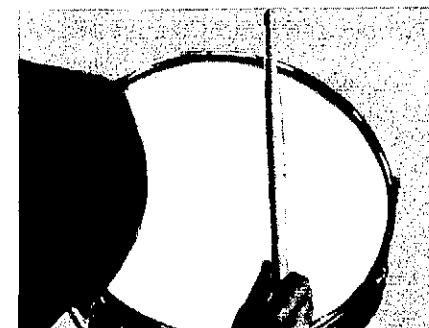


Fig. 6



The Grip

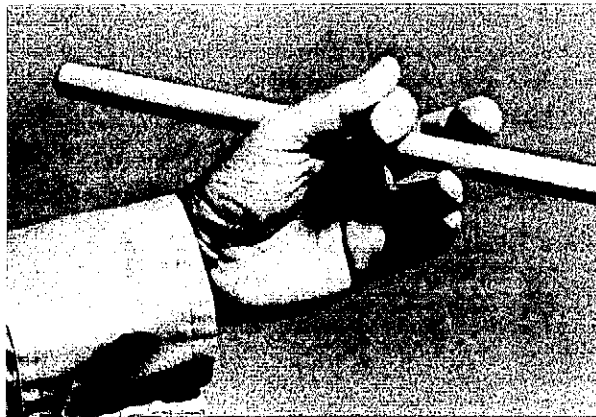
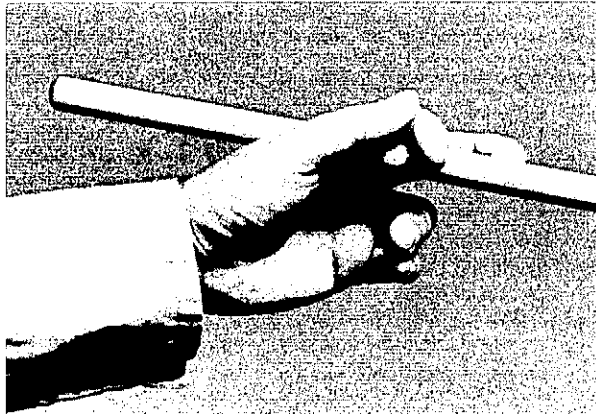


Fig. 9



The Matched Grip

The top of the matched grip, as seen by the student, is shown in Fig. 11.

Fig. 11



REMEMBER - When striking the drum, ALWAYS DRAW THE SOUND OUT OF THE INSTRUMENT. Use a quick snap stroke. Think - down, up. Say it quickly.

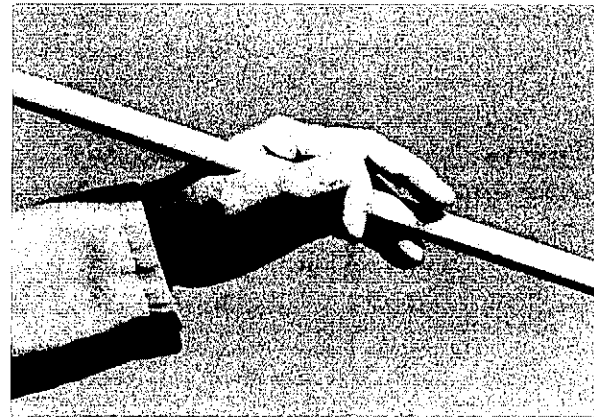


Fig. 10



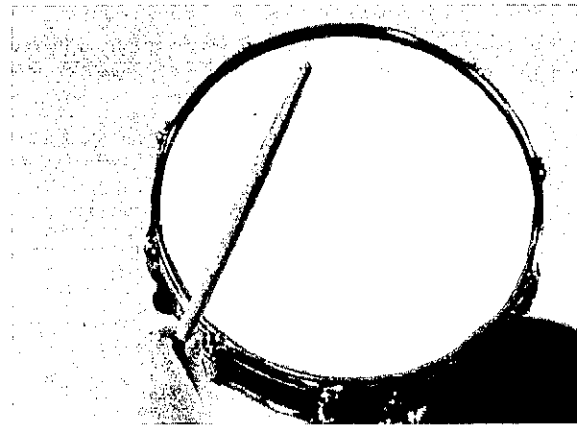
Right Hand

The right hand of the matched grip is the same as the traditional right hand grip. See Figures 2 - 6.

Left Hand

When using the matched grip, the left stick is held the same as the right hand. Fig. 12 shows the top of the left hand stroke.

Fig. 12



Because of the demands of contemporary performance and the ease of learning, the matched grip is recommended.
