

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERMEDIATE INSTRUCTION SERIES



**MALLET
PERCUSSION**

LAMAR BURKHALTER
CLINICIAN

50TH ANNUAL CLINIC
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
1997

FORWARD

The Texas Bandmasters Association is dedicated to providing its membership with an annual convention/clinic with the primary purpose of providing an educational experience. After much success with the past two years of the Beginner **Instruction Series**, TBA is sponsoring a new series of clinics on intermediate instructional teaching methods, presented by some of Texas' premier music educators during the 1997 and 1998 TBA Conventions in San Antonio, Texas. These master teachers, chosen from the ranks of superior music educators in the State, represent a wide diversity in geographic location, as well as, in teaching situations.

A session will be presented on six band instruments each with a companion handout. In each handout, you will find teaching methods, and classroom organizational skills which are used successfully in today's schools.

We acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the clinicians who prepared these booklets and, who also presented a clinic session. In addition, we acknowledge Jim Hagood, TBA Past President, and Bob Brandenberger, Immediate Past President, who provided us with the many benefits of the Beginner Instruction Series and laid the ground work for this new series of clinics. We also thank the many teachers from around the State who have shared their "secrets" for this project.

This series is respectfully dedicated to the legions of band directors who have gone before us and who have built the music education program that is unique in history: TEXAS' BANDS. Representing the best of this tradition was the 1990 President of TBA, the late Malcolm Helm, whose example of teaching inspired and challenged all of us.

Mike Olson, President, Texas Bandmasters Association

LAMAR BURKHALTER

Lamar Burkhalter is active as a performer in both live and studio settings in the Houston area, and has served as an adjudicator for numerous marching band and percussion festivals around the country. He is percussion coordinator for the Coronado High School Band in El Paso, Texas. He is currently in his ninth year as percussion director for Westfield High School and Bammel and Wells Middle Schools in the Spring ISD. Under his direction, the Westfield percussion program has received numerous honors in both concert and marching percussion, including being selected twice as the national high school division winner of the Percussive Arts Society's "Call for Tapes" Percussion Ensemble Contest.

The Intermediate Mallet Keyboard Player

by

Lamar D. Burkhalter

The seventh and eighth grade years are often the most overlooked years in a young percussionist's development. Although intermediate percussionists are able to perform in concert band and percussion ensemble settings during these years, the development of their technical and musical skills is often neglected due to time or staffing constraints. Beginning percussion is often addressed in many method books and clinics. Marching percussion and more advanced subjects seem to attract quite a bit of attention as well, but, the seventh and eighth grades seem to be the most misunderstood and least addressed.

The portion of the rehearsal that seems to be the most ineffective for this age is the warm up and tuning sequence that every band must perform to develop technique, intonation and a better ear for the wind players. With a little creativity and structure, this time can become very important to the development of the percussion section as well.

This clinic and handout will attempt to provide ideas for continuing the development of this age of player, and will attempt to provide solutions for coordinating these techniques with your current band or wind ensemble's daily warm up procedure. This handout is divided into three main sections that include: a review of a normal curriculum from the beginning percussionists previous year, intermediate exercises and their effect and benefit, and coordination of these exercises and concepts into a normal daily rehearsal routine.

I. Beginning Percussion-A review of the first year

- Stroke development
- Familiarity with the instrument
- Basic counting and note recognition
- Simple reading exercises
- Single hand exercises
- Execution and understanding of all 12 major scales and chromatic scale
- Optional scalular patterns and interval variations on scales

2. Intermediate Exercises and Benefits-The new techniques

- Octaves
- Arpeggios
- Roll quality
- Compound meters
- More advanced reading

3. Rehearsal Coordination-Quality rehearsal time for your percussionists

- Concert F or B flat
- "F Around the Room"
- "Remington"
- Chorale variations

I. Intermediate Exercises and Benefits

A. Octaves

1. Octaves Exercises (see attached exercise sheets)
 - a. “4-2-1”
 - b. “Home Base”
2. Octaves Benefits
 - a. Octaves become more prevalent in more advanced literature
 - b. Develops a better kinesthetic sense of movement around the instrument and a better sense of bar width as it relates to graduation of bars in the lower register
 - c. Works on developing stroke and a more consistent “flow” quicker, due to the use of both hands simultaneously
 - d. Prepares player for high school marching band “front ensemble” or “pit”; octaves are often used in this setting for projection

B. Arpeggios

1. Arpeggio Exercises (see attached exercise sheets)
 - a. “Single Octave”
 - b. “Stair-step”
2. Arpeggio Benefits
 - a. Allows for a more intellectual understanding of the structure of music
 - b. Develops more advanced technical proficiency on the instrument
 - c. Develops visual proficiency through the introduction of “skips” in addition to steps
 - d. Develops better understanding of intervals and chord structure
 - e. Introduces compound or triple time signatures through a daily routine

C. Rolls and Quality of Sound

Personally, I have found that I do not have the time to dedicate an entire exercise to the development of a better mallet keyboard roll within a normal class period. I do, however, believe that this is a very important aspect to address at the intermediate level on a regular basis. Most single stroke rolls on mallet instruments, at this stage of development, possess qualities that are anything but legato and sustaining. Usually they are quite the opposite; a loud attack with no body of sound to the sustain, softer than the non-rolled notes around them, and very uneven. With only a few words and a little work, a nice, even, sustaining roll is possible with this age of player.

The most common problem with rolls is that young players adopt the mentality that because it is a roll, you must move your hands very fast. The problem here is twofold. First, more often than not, the player attempts to strike the bar with a frequency that is far beyond the ability of their hands.

Thus, creating a roll that has a very hard attack and virtually no body of sound. Secondly, the roll is oftentimes too fast for the bar to correctly respond and the mallets actually end up muffling the bar instead of producing more tone. Young players seem to forget that these instruments have a much longer decay than a snare drum or wood block and that the decay will help them with their sound. This is most apparent on middle to lower register marimba, although it also applies on lower xylophone as well.

The easiest way to correct this is to simply reinforce the idea of a slower, bigger stroke, and remind them of the decay. I use an analogy of striving for the tone of a **downbow** stroke on a cello. A large sound with minimal attack and a **full** release.

II. Rehearsal Coordination

A. Concert F or B-flat

1. Train your percussionists to listen to and understand the concert pitch, as you do with all of the wind players.
 - a. As you make adjustments while tuning your group, randomly ask percussionists if they think the pitch is sharp or flat. This will greatly improve and develop pitch accuracy for timpani tuning
 - b. Ask percussionists to sing the pitch, just as you would have your brass players “buzz” or your woodwinds play on their reed. This is a great way to keep kids involved in the classroom, avoid discipline problems and teach them about pitch.

B. “F Around the Room”

1. Structure the percussion section as one of the groups that trade the pitch, and have them sing the pitch as a group

C. “Remington” Coordination

1. “Remington” exercise options (see attached exercise sheet)
 - a. **Triple/Duple**: Single octave, hand to hand, eighth note to triplet timing
 - b. **Octave Rolls!** In octaves, alternating measures between eighth notes and legato rolls
2. Benefits of Remington exercises
 - a. **Triple/Duple**
 1. Understanding of duple to triple feel changes
 2. Time to work on a balanced sound, hand to hand
 - b. **Octave Rolls**
 1. Roll development
 2. Development of “keeping time” while rolling at a contrasting speed

D. Chorale Coordination

1. Chorale coordination options
 - a. In octaves, playing in eighth notes but rolling all half notes and longer
 - b. Single octave, hand to hand, in alternating sixteenths throughout

2. Benefits of Chorale coordination
 - a. Octaves
 1. Roll development
 2. Development of “keeping time” while rolling at a contrasting speed
 - b. Sixteenth Notes
 1. Velocity of sixteenth notes
 2. Time to work on a balanced sound, hand to hand

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Octaves Exercises

by Lamar D. Burkhalter

"4-2-1"

The "4-2-1" exercise consists of four staves of music. The first staff is in common time (C) and starts with a treble clef. The second staff is in G major (one sharp) and starts with a treble clef. The third staff is in F major (one flat) and starts with a treble clef. The fourth staff is in E major (two sharps) and starts with a treble clef. Each staff contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, with various accidentals (sharps and flats) indicating the key signature for each line.

"Home Base"

The "Home Base" exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in common time (C) and starts with a treble clef. The second staff is in G major (one sharp) and starts with a treble clef. Both staves contain a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, with various accidentals (sharps and flats) indicating the key signature for each line.

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Arpeggio Exercises

by Lamar D. Burkhalter

“Single Octave”

LRL RLRL L R L R *simile*

& continue into the circle of fifths

“Stair-step”

& continue thru the circle of fifths

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Remington Exercises

by Lamar D. Burkhalter

“Triple/Duple”

The "Triple/Duple" exercise consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. It features a sequence of eighth notes with triplet markings (three notes grouped under a '3') and a 'simile' instruction. Below the first staff, the letters 'R L R L R L' are written, indicating a right-left-right-left-right-left pattern. The second staff continues the pattern with similar triplet markings. The third and fourth staves also feature triplet markings and eighth-note patterns, with the fourth staff ending in a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

continue thru the Remington exercise

“Eighths & Rolls”

The "Eighths & Rolls" exercise consists of three staves of music. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The first two staves feature eighth-note patterns, followed by a section of rests marked with a double bar line and a roll symbol (three slanted lines). The third staff continues with eighth-note patterns, also including a roll symbol. The notation is designed to be played in conjunction with the "Triple/Duple" exercise above it.

continue thru the Remington exercise