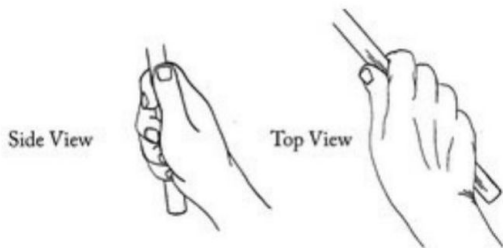


Things to know for all mallet instruments!

1. Gripping One Mallet

- a. Grip the mallet shaft with the thumb and first joint - find the *fulcrum (pivot point)*! The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, fingers gently control the butt of the mallet against the palm of your hand.

Right Hand Shown



2. Standing at the Instrument

- a. Position your body so your forearm is slightly downwards to your wrist while the mallets sit one inch above the keyboard. (Wrists stay mostly flat)
- b. Put the head of the mallet over the “natural” keys so your elbow are only 1-2 inches behind the center of your body (See Example 12)
- c. When reaching out to accidentals, you should move your arm forward from the shoulder (See Example 13)
- d. Do not stand too close to the instrument - this will cause tension and also poor sound production. (See Example 14)



Example 12: Good instrument height



Example 13: Good use of shoulder to reach accidentals



Example 14: Too close to the instrument/
Elbows too far back

3. Striking the bar
 - a. Always aim to play in the center of the bar for the best sound
 - b. When playing faster, more chromatic (step by step) passages, you can play on the very edge of the bar for the sharp and flat keys
 - c. Do not strike the *node* - this is the part of the bar where the string passes through the mallet to hold it in place - this produces a very poor sound quality

Essential Range
Mallet Percussion Chart

Correlates with
STEPWISE FLASHCARDS
www.fingeringcharts.org

4. The Pedal (Vibraphone)
 - a. Much like a piano, the pedal is used to sustain (hold) the sound.
 - b. Gently press down with your toes on the edge of the pedal
 - c. Release the pedal to dampen (stop) the sound
 - d. Along with the pedal, vibraphone players also use the “muting” technique with the head of their mallets to stop certain notes from ringing when the pedal is down.

5. Mallet Selection



a.

b. Mallet Shafts

i. When selecting a mallet, it is important to consider what the *shaft* of the stick is made from.

1. Rattan

- a. A flexible species of palm also used to make furniture
- b. Often used for xylophone and vibraphone
- c. Flexible

2. Birch

- a. Not very flexible
- b. Usually longer (Good for four mallet playing!)

3. Fiberglass and Plastic

- a. Created to mimic (copy) the flexibility of rattan mallets
- b. Cheaper - Easily broken

c. *Also study the mallet notes below that are specific to the different instruments!*

6. Types of Mallet Instruments

a. Marimba

- i. Wide range (between 4 and 5 octaves)
- ii. Resonators are usually longer to produce a warmer sound
- iii. Bars are made from different species of hardwood and are typically longer than xylophone bars
- iv. Mallets:
 - 1. Usually wrapped in yarn over a hard plastic core (center)
 - 2. Mostly use birch shafts - rattan is also used

3. Do NOT use hard plastic mallets because the bars are fragile!



b. Xylophone

- i. Typical range is 3 ½ to 4 octaves
- ii. Bars made from fiberglass or wood and uses *overtones* to produce a bright and cutting sound
- iii. Mallets:
 1. Usually hard plastic or medium/hard rubber mallets work best
 2. Sometimes, we use yarn mallets to produce a soft marimba-like sound



c. Vibraphone (vibes)

- i. Typically have a 3 octave range
- ii. Metal bars
- iii. Pedal for a dampening system
- iv. Multiple speed electric motor that turns metal disks at the top of the resonators to make a vibrato sound
- v. Mallets:
 1. Typically a yarn mallet with rattan shafts are best. Rubber mallets are also sometimes used. Hard plastic produces a poor tone on vibes - do not use it unless instructed to.
 2. Cord mallets are also often used (hard core with cord material wrapping the top)



d. Glockenspiel (bells or orchestra bells)

- i. Range is usually between 2 ½ to 3 octaves
- ii. Metal bars
- iii. Bright, piercing sound
- iv. Mallets:
 1. Hard mallets (plastic, brass, rubber)

- v. A well-developed tap stroke is needed to produce a good sound on this instrument.



e. Chimes (Tubular Bells)

- i. Range is typically 1 ½ octaves
- ii. Long metal tubes hung inside a frame
- iii. Has a pedal for a dampening system
- iv. Mallets:
 - 1. Also called “hammers” for chimes
 - 2. Made from hardened rawhide on a plastic or wooden handle.
 - 3. Struck at a downward angle from the top (slightly tilt the mallet)
 - 4. Plastic hammers are also used
 - 5. Metal hammers are NOT to be used! The metal bars can crack easily!



Playing Test Material

Level 1

Find a partner - One person learns from the beginning to measure 2 on the third line - One person learns from measure 3 of the third line to the end.

Or - play the entire piece by yourself

Moderato
f
YANKEE DOODLE
Arranged by M. Goldenberg

505B

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'YANKEE DOODLE' arranged by M. Goldenberg. The score is written in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It begins with the tempo marking 'Moderato' and the dynamic marking 'f' (forte). The music consists of four staves of notation. The first staff contains the first two measures of the piece. The second staff contains measures 3 through 6. The third staff contains measures 7 through 10. The fourth staff contains measures 11 through 14, ending with a double bar line. The score is printed on a page with the number '505B' in the bottom left corner.

Level 2

- Find a partner - One person plays from the beginning to the end of the second line (measure 6)
- One person plays from the third line (measure 7) to the end.

Or - play the entire piece by yourself!

Moderato

IV

p L

R

R R

R R R

R R

R l R

Level 3 (Two Mallet Test)

Play the passage from Circle 2 to Circle 5 at tempo



Level 4 (Two and Four Mallet Test)

Play the level three excerpt (same requirements as that group)

Download either "Yellow After the Rain" or "Rain Dance" from Scribd and play a short excerpt from either piece on 4 mallet marimba (using stevens grip)