

THE MALLET PLAYER'S TOOLBOX

from Row-Loff



The
Absolute
Method
for Mallet
Percussion

by John R. Hearnnes

With contributions from Chris Crockarell & Chris Brooks

Row-Loff would like to thank the following people for their help in sharpening the tools in this toolbox: Jamie Hearnnes, David England, Mark McHale, Leisa Barrier, Robin Kinney, Grant Waldron, Larry Lawless, Julie Hill, Jana Davis, Ward Durrett, Lalo Davila, Julie Davila, Philip Gregory, Ron Sorbo, David Steinquest, and music teachers everywhere that have kept asking, "When is Row-Loff gonna come out with a Mallet Toolbox to go along with The Snare Drummer's Toolbox?" We'd like to give a special thanks to Mark Donaldson at Donaldson Design Group for another spectacular book cover, Chris Brooks for the layout of this awe-inspiring book, Chris Crumley with Marshall Chatham Photography for shooting the photos, and Allen Haynes at The Music Stop.

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About the Author

John R. Hearnes received his first pair of drumsticks in 1989 when he joined band in Cape Girardeau, MO. He studied percussion under Mark McHale and Mark Ellison. After graduating from Central High School, John studied at Southeast Missouri State University under Dr. Daniel Dunavan, then earned a BME from Middle Tennessee State University where he studied under Lalo Davila, David Brochocki, Andy Smith, and Dr. Julie Hill. It was through Lalo Davila that John met Chris Crockarell and Chris Brooks from Row-Loff Productions. He began arranging and composing for RLP in 2002. Although his works cover the spectrum of difficulty, John has focused on increasing the amount of literature written for young players, especially beginners.

John is currently a middle school band director in Rutherford County, TN, a job he has held since 2001. He endorses Innovative Percussion sticks and mallets. John is a composer, performer, educator, clinician, adjudicator, and most importantly, still a student on all facets of percussion. He lives in Murfreesboro, TN, with his wife and their two sons.



Let's Make Some Noise . . . The Full Stroke

First, let's try a little exercise without your mallets. With your right hand, tap in the air above your mallet keyboard with your knuckles, like you'd knock on a door. Primary movement should be from the wrist. There should be little movement of your forearm. Now try it with your left hand. This is the same motion you'll use for the full stroke. Practice this until it feels comfortable.

Now, while holding a mallet in the proper matched grip position, use the same wrist motion and hit Middle C (see the top of page 8) in the center of the bar with your right hand. For the full stroke, allow the mallet to rebound off the bar and, using the wrist, lift the mallet the rest of the way back to the starting position. The rebound/lift should be one motion. For now, the mallet should always be moving straight up and down in a constant fluid motion. Now try it with the left hand.



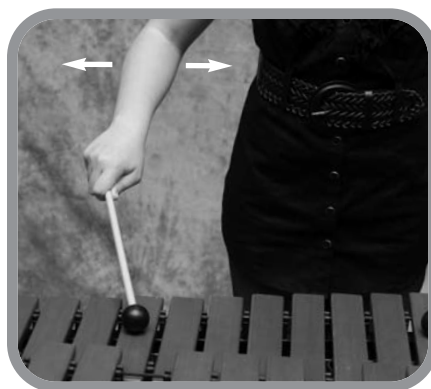
The full stroke on mallet instruments is similar to that of the snare drum. The main difference is that the mallet bars do not provide the same rebound as a snare drum head. A drumstick dropped from a position twelve inches off the head will rebound very close to the starting position. A mallet dropped from the same height will only rebound an inch or so.

The basic concept to remember about the proper stroke for mallets is to allow the mallet to rebound off of the bar using both the natural rebound and a little help from the wrists.

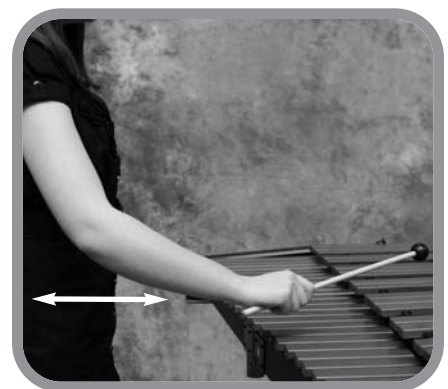
- Allow the mallet to rebound off the bar.
- Maintain a fluid and relaxed motion.
- For now, the mallet should always be moving straight up and down.
- Primary movement should be from the wrist. There should be little movement from your forearm.



Wrist



Side to Side



Front to Back

Unlike on snare drum, where the stroke is moving straight up and down and the forearm moves very little, the stroke for mallets may require more movement of the arm depending on what notes are needed on the keyboard. The wrist provides the initial up and down motion for the stroke, and it can also move side to side for changes to notes close by. The shoulder and elbow combine to move the wrist and forearm from side to side (higher and lower notes) and from front to back (white keys to black). **These motions are not robotic; all of them combine into one fluid set of motions for use in playing the mallet keyboard.**

Note Duration & Counting

Half Notes & Rests

For now, treat the half notes on mallets as you would on the snare drum. Hit the keyboard once, and count through the two beats.

1 - 2 (3) - (4) | 1 - 2 (3) - (4)

Tip - Follow the direction of the melody line. If the notes move up on the staff, you will be moving your mallets to the right. If they move down, you'll move your mallets to the left.

Hot Cross Buns

1)

2)

Whole Notes & Rests

For now, treat the whole notes on mallets as you would on the snare drum. Hit the keyboard once, and count through the four beats.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 | (1) - (2) - (3) - (4)

COUNT, SAY, & PLAY the following exercises. Remember, the most important skill a mallet player will learn is how to read music off the page. Watch for steps and skips, and follow the direction of the line.

3)

4)

When playing mallets, duration can be accomplished with the use of a roll. We'll cover rolls in Lesson 5.

Accidentals

There are times in music when a composer needs to use a note that is outside (different than) what is in the key signature. These notes are marked with a flat - ♭, sharp - ♯, or natural sign - ♮, and they are referred to as “accidentals.” (A natural sign cancels a flat or sharp.)

There is a very important rule regarding accidentals: accidentals are good for the entire measure (and only that one measure) unless replaced by another accidental. In other words, once a note is changed with an accidental, every note **after** on that same line or space is changed in that measure (Ex. 1). In that same measure, if the note from the key signature is desired again, a canceling accidental is needed (Ex. 2). Once you move into the next measure, the accidental is no longer good and the original key signature is followed (Ex. 3).

Example 1



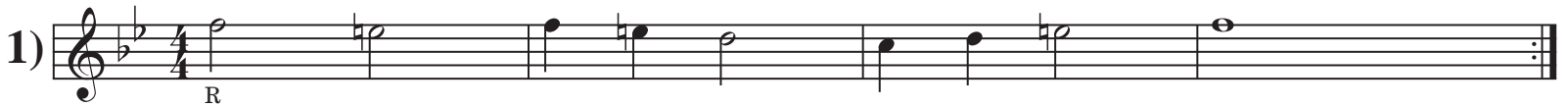
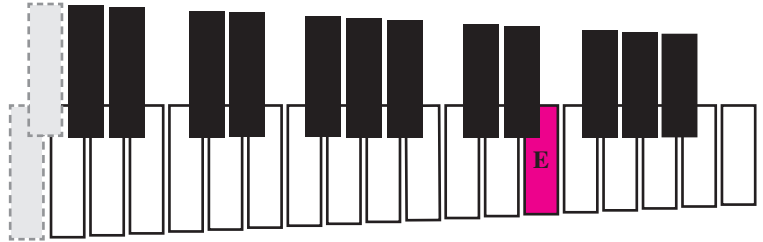
Example 2



Example 3



Now let's add another new note - E



Now we know the notes for a new scale: **the F Major Scale.**

F to G
(Whole Step)

G to A
(Whole Step)

A to Bb
(Half Step)

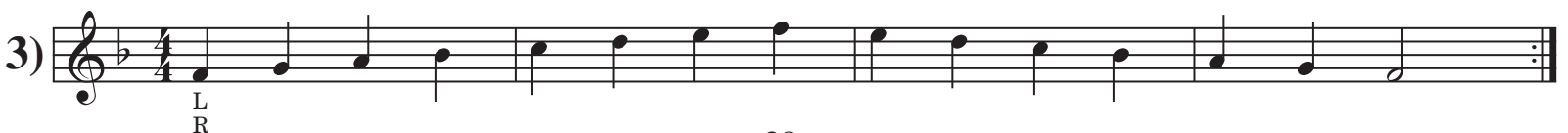
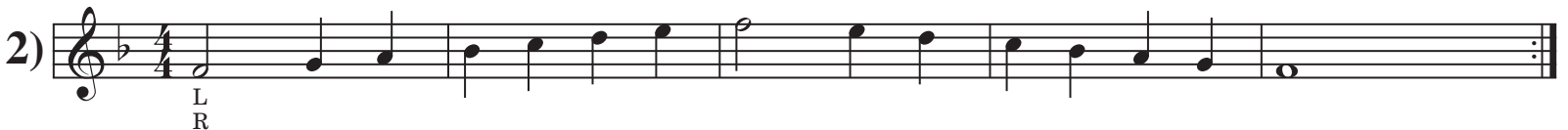
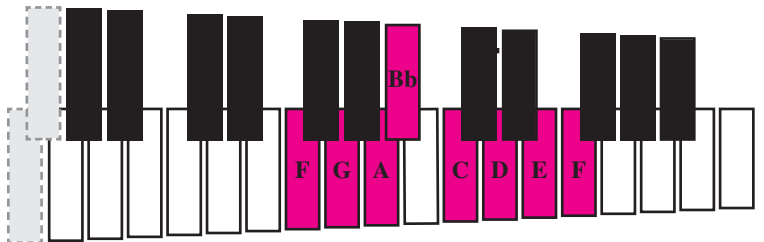
Bb to C
(Whole Step)

C to D
(Whole Step)

D to E
(Whole Step)

E to F
(Half Step)

F Major Scale (The Key of F)
This scale contains Bb



Eye-Q Review - Lesson 5

Match It Up

Draw a line from the left column to its match on the right.

Eighth Rest

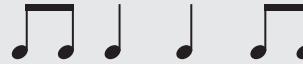
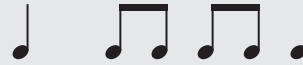
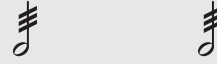
1 & 2 3 4 &

Two Half Note Rolls

An Arpeggio

1 2 & 3 & 4

F - A - C - F



In the music below, write in the counts above the notes and rests.



In the music below, write in the note names.



Multiple Choice

1) On mallets, duration is accomplished with: ____

- A - a Bb
- B - a repeat sign
- C - a roll
- D - 2nd ending

3) After playing the 1st ending, you: ____

- A - immediately take a nap
- B - repeat three times
- C - repeat and play the 1st & 2nd endings
- D - repeat and play the 2nd ending

2) Rolls are notated with: ____

- A - eighth notes
- B - slashes
- C - dynamic markings
- D - a pencil

4) Which note is shorter than a quarter note? ____

- A - an eighth note
- B - a whole note
- C - a half note
- D - a doctor's note

Hi

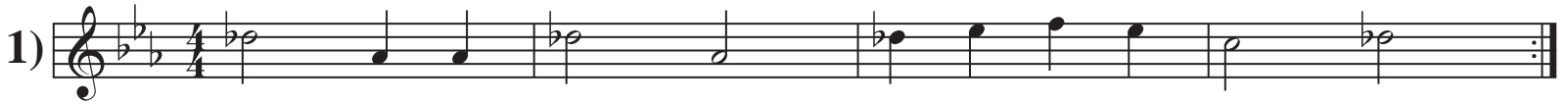
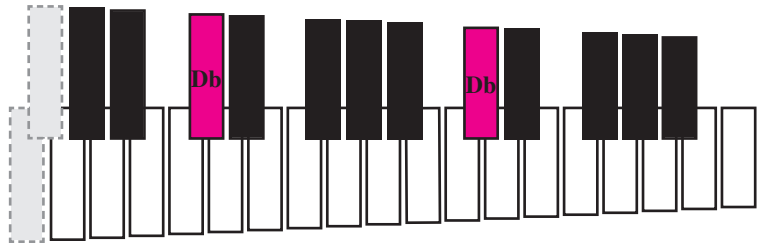


Eye-Q

Circle the arpeggios in the line of music below.



Let's learn two more notes - **Octave Db's**



We're ready for our fourth scale: **the Ab Major Scale.**

Ab to Bb
(Whole Step)

Bb to C
(Whole Step)

C to Db
(Half Step)

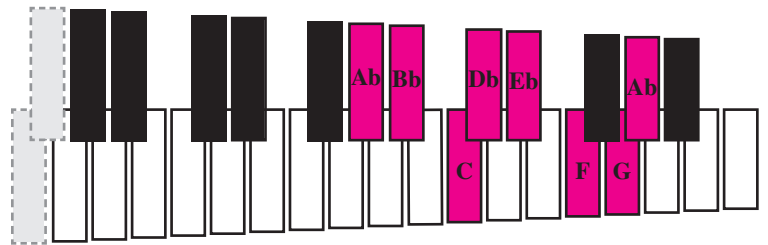
Db to Eb
(Whole Step)

Eb to F
(Whole Step)

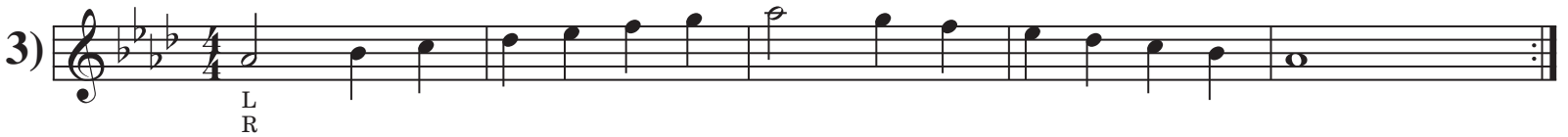
F to G
(Whole Step)

G to Ab
(Half Step)

Ab Major Scale (The Key of Ab)
This scale contains Bb, Eb, Ab, & Db



Ab Major Scale Exercises



Now that you're familiar with the Ab Major Scale, drop to the low Ab and practice the scale in two octaves.

Ab Major Arpeggio Exercises



Rhythm Review

Clap the following rhythms in the next two exercises. Then split into two groups and play lines A & B as a duet.



Fresh Cut Rolls

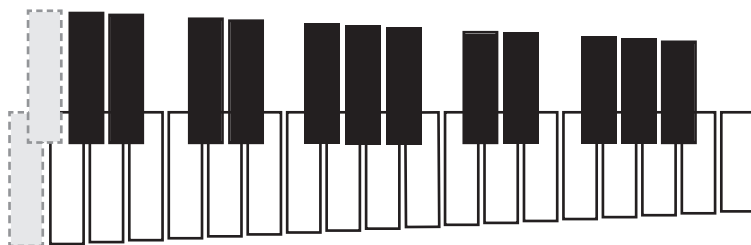
If the double strokes are too fast, you can play them L R instead of R R.

$\text{♩} = 92 - 120$ *Symphony #5 (Beethoven)*

The exercise consists of three staves of music in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The first staff starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note (R), then a half note (R), and ends with a quarter note (R R). The second staff contains eighth notes and sixteenth notes with various handings: L R R L R R, R R L R R L R R, and R L. The third staff features slurs over eighth notes with handings R L, R L R, L, R, L, and R.

Fun with the Black Keys (Pentatonic Scale)

Let's take a break from learning exercises and have some fun with our creative side! We've discussed major scales in this book, but another type of scale is called a **pentatonic scale** which is made up of five notes. The five different black keys within any octave make a pentatonic scale.



You can improvise your own melodies on the black keys without ever hitting a wrong note. Have other students improvise a different part to go with yours. All musical choices are up to you: time signatures, dynamics, rhythms, tempo, etc. Use different combinations of mallet instruments to explore different tonal colors. If you keep track of what you play (write it down), you're now composing. Have fun improvising and composing!

Scales In Thirds

As you have seen so far in this book, music uses skips and steps in combination to create a melody. A great way to practice playing steps is to play scales. For skips, try playing the following exercises with all of the scales you know (you need one note above and below the scale). These exercises are called "**Scales In Thirds**" since you are playing the interval of a third (two pitches that are three notes apart).

Three musical exercises in 4/4 time, each starting with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note (L) and then a half note (R). Exercise 1 is in C major, Exercise 2 is in Bb major, and Exercise 3 is in Ab major.

Practice the Scales In Thirds pattern with all of the scales you know. See the addendum for a complete list.

News Flash



Road Map Signs



Sometimes when reading music you may come across the following terms or symbols which guide you through the music. These “directions” will have you jumping ahead or going back to a specific measure.

Here are the terms and symbols most commonly used:

D.C. = Da Capo - go back to the beginning

Fine = the end of the piece

D.S. = Dal Segno - go back to the Sign - S

Coda = a separate ending to the piece, denoted by a Coda Sign - C

You will find these terms in many combinations, but the most commonly used are:

D.C. al Fine - Go back to the beginning and play to the Fine.

D.S. al Coda - Go back to the Sign, play to the Coda Sign, then jump to the second Coda Sign to end the piece.

(These road map exercises can be played with page 57 of *The Snare Drummer's Toolbox*.)

In the example below, you will play bars 1 through 12.

The **D.C. al Fine** tells you to go back to bar 1 (the beginning) and play through bar 8 (Fine), which is the end of the piece.

In the example below, you will play bars 1 through 8.

The **D.S. al Coda** tells you to go back to bar 3 (the Sign) and play through the end of bar 6 (Coda Sign).

From the end of bar 6 you will “take the Coda” (jump to bar 9, second Coda Sign) and play to the end (bar 12).

Note: When playing a D.C. or D.S. (unless otherwise marked), the tempo should remain consistent - i.e., **DON'T STOP!**

Triple Meter Exercises

1) 

2) *Hickory Dickory Dock* (4-&) a 

3) 



CHALLENGE!

4) 



News Flash

Double Stops

Unlike brass and woodwind players, mallet players can play more than one note at a time. Striking two notes at the same time is called playing a **double stop**.

When playing double stops, it is important to keep each mallet the same height and to strike each bar in the same place to get an equal sound. The notes should sound at the same time, **not** like a flam does on the snare drum. When rolling a double stop, keep one hand on each note and roll as usual. Make smooth transitions between notes.

5) 

6) 

7) 

Canon in D (Pachelbel)

8) 

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