

MARIMBA *for* FOUR

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOUR-MALLET MARIMBA TECHNIQUE

By DAVID STEINQUEST

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Photos and Front Cover Design by Allison Steinquest

Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide the beginning four-mallet marimba player with a set of exercises, etudes, and solos that will build foundational technique through music that does not “talk down” to the student. I held as my standard Peter Tchaikovsky and Robert Schumann, who both wrote a set of easy piano pieces entitled *Album for the Young*. After completing this book, the student should be able to successfully move on to the standard marimba literature.

I used different tempos, clef combinations, key signatures, time signatures, road maps, and musical styles to help the student learn to navigate various situations and keep it interesting.

The material is divided into two sections. The first section features the different stroke types (double vertical strokes, single independent strokes, single alternating strokes, and double lateral strokes) and the traditional roll. Each stroke type and the traditional roll has a page of exercises and a one-page etude focusing on that particular technique. The second section includes six solos. The first five solos expand the study of each of the four stroke types and the traditional roll. The final solo utilizes all the different techniques that have been introduced.

I would recommend that anyone interested in playing four-mallet marimba purchase *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens. It is the “bible” of four-mallet technique and I don’t need to reinvent that wheel! However, this book will provide basic information to get you going.

This book is dedicated to Benjamin Steinquest, who could have used it ten years ago, and Sam Campbell, who needs it now!

The Grip

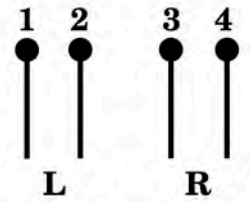
There are three different four-mallet grips: the Traditional Grip, the Burton Grip, and the Musser / Stevens Grip. The first two employ a cross-stick approach, while the third is an independent grip (the sticks do not touch each other). I use the Musser / Stevens Grip, as I believe it is the most versatile, and will describe how I teach it.

Hold one mallet as you would to play matched grip, but rotate the hand so that the thumb is on top. Slide the mallet out until the back end of the mallet is in the middle of your palm. The index finger hangs over the middle finger and the shaft of the mallet rests on the first joint of the index finger. This mallet is controlled by the thumb, index, and middle finger. This is your inside mallet.



Exercise & Etude Notes

The first exercises on each page are general exercises to become familiar with that particular stroke type. Mallet stickings are numbered 1-2-3-4 from left to right as pictured in this diagram. At first, the exercises should be practiced on the written notes with repetition (repeat them at least four times!). When comfortable with the stroke, play each exercise moving up chromatically (by half-step: C to C#, C# to D, D to D#, etc.) on each repetition through all twelve keys. I'm going to use a piano reference for this next statement. As you move chromatically, the position over two "white notes" (like C and G) or two "black notes" (like F# and C#) uses an elbow position which hangs straight down from the shoulder. A "black note / white note" combination (like Bb and F) requires an "elbow out" position (away from the body) for the left hand and an "elbow in" position (against the body) for the right hand. A "white note / black note" combination (like B and F#) requires an "elbow in" position for the left hand and an "elbow out" position for the right hand.



The rest of the exercises address how to break down the etude and practice the problem spots.

Double Vertical Stroke

Exercises 1-5 are the general exercises for the double vertical stroke. The etude is written in treble clef range. I used two separate treble clefs to make clear what are the right and left hand responsibilities.

Exercises 6-8 demonstrate the technique of hands-alone practice: right hand with repetition, left hand with repetition, and then hands together with repetition (you may be getting the idea that repetition is a really important part of this process!).

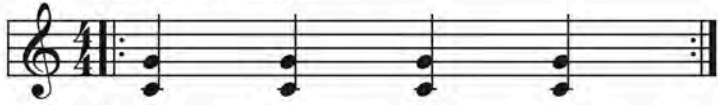
Exercise 9 is an example of chunking (taking a small section and practicing it over and over for accuracy).

Exercise 10 analyzes the chord progression in measures 7 and 8 of the etude (it's never too early to start learning some music theory!) A triad is three notes that can be stacked in thirds. C is a major triad composed of a major third (a distance of four half-steps: C to E) with a minor third (a distance of three half-steps: E to G) stacked on top of it. Am is a minor triad composed of a minor third (A to C) with a major third (C to E) stacked on top of it. G is another major triad (G-B-D).

Exercise 11 puts these chords into the context of the etude.

Double Vertical Exercises

1 (Left Hand Alone)



2 (Right Hand Alone)



3 (Hands Together)



4



5



6 Etude m. 1-5 (Right Hand Alone)



7 Etude m. 1-5 (Left Hand Alone)



8 Etude m. 1-5 (Hands Together)



Single Independent Etude

by David Steinquest

$\text{♩} = 88$

mf

3 4 2 3 4 4 3

1 2

Detailed description: This system contains measures 1 through 4. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand starts with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by quarter-note triplets in measures 2, 3, and 4. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Fingering numbers are provided above the right-hand notes and below the left-hand notes.

5 6 7 4 3 4 3 8 3 *Fine*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 8. The right hand continues with quarter-note triplets in measures 5 and 6, then moves to quarter notes in measures 7 and 8. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The word 'Fine' is written at the end of the system.

A 9 4 3 10 11 12 4 3

f

Detailed description: This system contains measures 9 through 12. A box labeled 'A' is placed above measure 9. The right hand plays quarter notes in measures 9 and 10, then quarter-note triplets in measures 11 and 12. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking *f* is present in measure 9. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Double Lateral Exercises

1

1 2 3 4

2

4 3 2 1

3

3 4 2 1

4

4 3 1 2

5 Etude m. 1-2 (Blocking)

F# D#m C#sus4

6 Etude m. 1-2

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

7 Etude m. 7-8 (Blocking)

B/G# B/A# B C#sus4 C#

8 Etude m. 7-8

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Insistence

by David Steinquest

Insistence was inspired by Charles Mink's *14 Miniature Etudes for Mallet Percussion*. This piece concentrates on single independent strokes. Be sure to rotate around the unused mallet. Remember to always bring out the melodic line over the accompaniment, but don't stop knocking on that eighth-note ostinato! I insist!

The musical score is written for piano and mallet percussion. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 132. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two main sections, A and B.

Section A: This section consists of 15 measures. It begins with a piano part playing a continuous eighth-note ostinato in the bass clef, starting on G4. The piano part is marked *f* (forte) for the first two measures and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the remainder. The mallet percussion part, in the treble clef, plays a melodic line consisting of eighth-note patterns. The first two measures are rests. Measures 3-5 show a sequence of eighth notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). Measures 6-15 continue this melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note runs and rests. A repeat sign is placed above measure 3. A section marker 'A' with a repeat symbol is located above measure 3. A section marker 'B' is located above measure 19.

Section B: This section consists of 4 measures (measures 16-19). It begins with a piano part playing a continuous eighth-note ostinato in the bass clef, starting on G4. The piano part is marked *f* (forte). The mallet percussion part, in the treble clef, plays a melodic line consisting of eighth-note patterns. The first two measures are rests. Measures 3-4 show a sequence of eighth notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). A section marker 'B' is located above measure 19.

Wavelength

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Wavelength was borne out of a deep love and respect for Clair Omar Musser's preludes and etudes. This composition provides practice on double lateral strokes. Remember that it only takes one scooping motion to play the two notes of this stroke. Like *Reverie*, this solo depends on the accent pattern to bring out the melodic line. Let the music have the undulation of waves!

$\text{♩} = 112$

4 3 2 *mp*

4 3 2 5 6 4 3 1 *mf*

A

4 3 2 4 3 1 4 3 2 *mf*

mp

16 17 18

Mixed Messages

pg. 2

D

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

f

mp

E ♩ = 80

47 48 49 50 51 52

mp

1 2

53 54 55 56 57 58