

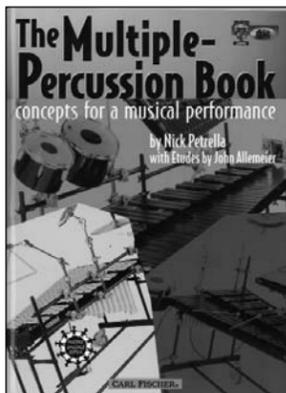
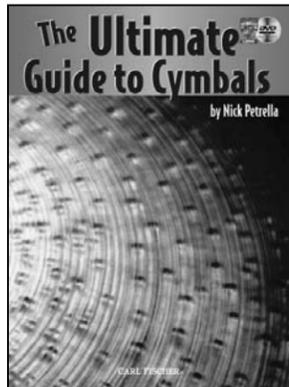
NEW PERCUSSION BOOK SENSATIONS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CYMBALS

by Nick Petrella

Everything you always wanted to know about the history, manufacture, maintenance and use of all varieties and types of cymbals is contained in this extraordinary book with DVD. The special concerns of concert music players, marching band players and drum-set players are all addressed and the accompanying DVD demonstrates playing techniques as well as such related issues as the cymbal-making process and the use of cymbals in all kinds of ensemble performances. Also included on the DVD are interviews with celebrated percussionists, who answer questions on topics including performing, teaching, the music business and rehearsal techniques. This book and its companion DVD will be a basic resource for all serious percussionists, no matter what the genres of music they are involved with.

DRM104 – The Ultimate Guide to Cymbals – Petrella – Book & DVD
(ISBN 08258-4905-5)



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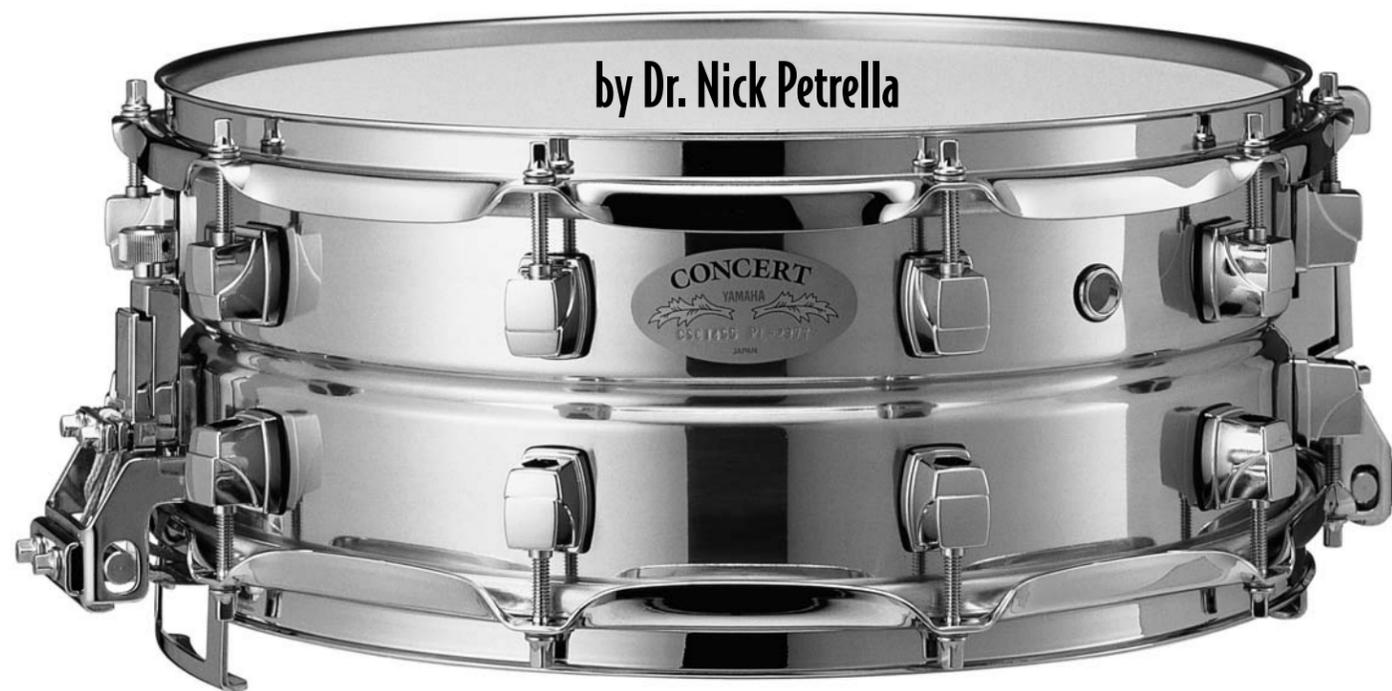
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Seven Simple Steps to Start Successful Snare Drummers



A SPECIAL CLINIC SPONSORED BY:





Nick Petrella

Dr. Nick Petrella is the Band & Orchestra Educational Director for SABIAN. In addition to his position at SABIAN, Nick is on the faculty at Oakland University and is active in commissioning new music. From 1996 to 2001, Nick was the Director of Percussion Studies at Texas Christian University. He holds a DMA in Percussion Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa, an MM in Percussion Performance from the University of Michigan and a BSMusED from Penn State University. He served as the percussion instructor/arranger for both the University of Iowa Marching Band and the Michigan Marching Band.

During the 1992-93 academic year Nick Petrella was invited to develop the percussion pedagogy course at the Royal Northern College of Music, England. It was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. He toured the US and Spain as a founding member of the percussion ensemble Percunits A² and taught at the Encuentros de Percussion in Xixona (Alicante) in the summer of 1992. In 1997 and 1998 he was the percussion coach for the Orchestre Mondail des Jeunes Musicales (World Youth Orchestra) in Switzerland and Taiwan respectively.

Committed to percussion education, Nick has had numerous articles published in US and European music journals. Nick is in demand as a clinician, teacher and performer throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

Developing a Relaxed and Fluid Motion

A player should use his or her own natural motion as the building block for developing a fluid and effective technique. When considering fluid motion, an effective method is to stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and visualize yourself in a still, chest-high pool of water. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart to provide a solid foundation and lessen tension in the lower back. Without the cymbals, move your arms, wrists and fingers to start the imaginary water moving in circles away from you, similar to the waves made as a rock is dropped into still water. This motion is accomplished by maintaining a barrel shape in the arms, while smoothly bending all joints from the shoulder to the fingers. By not using cymbals at this point, it allows the focus to remain only on arm motion. See track 30 on the DVD.

This exercise is worthwhile because it tends to be easier to concentrate on fluid motion without implements in hand and because this fluid motion is common to all percussion instruments. Horizontally, this motion could be used when playing a tam-tam, moving between timpani or playing a bass drum vertically on a cradle. At an angle this is the same motion as used when playing a tilted bass drum, a tambourine or cymbals.

Many times percussionists are not aware of tension because they are familiar with a particular way of playing even if it is inefficient. The arms are obvious places to watch for tension, but the face is also important. If there is tension in the face there is almost always tension elsewhere. One way to become aware of tension is to focus on which muscles are used when playing. Have a friend close his or her eyes and tense one arm from the shoulder to a clenched fist. Touch the arm at the shoulder and slowly move toward the fist. Ask the friend to relax the part of the arm that is currently being touched while keeping the rest of the arm tense. For example, first relax the shoulder, then biceps, forearm, wrist, and finally the fist. Another method to facilitate relaxation is to have a friend extend an arm chest-high and parallel with the floor. Hold the arm by the wrist and ask the player to relax the arm. When relaxed, the arm should fall as soon as it is released. Use these examples as springboards to devise other relaxation techniques. In general, efficiency and accuracy improve as relaxation is incorporated.

Practice and Performance Suggestions

The following practice suggestions will aid in developing effective techniques and a musical approach to percussion performance. They should be used as springboards to devise your own ideas, and are not ranked in order of importance.

Incorporate a percentage of daily practice time in front of a mirror(s). Practice not only facing the mirror but also standing 45 degrees to the left and the right. These angles allow you to observe the fluidity of your motions. While using a mirror or providing visual feedback for others, look for tension in the face. If there is tension in the face, there is almost always tension elsewhere. Tension inhibits the fluid and relaxed motion needed for effective and efficient technique.

When practicing loudly, use earplugs. For those concerned with the ability to accurately hear the sound of cymbals through the earplugs, purchase custom-made earplugs that reduce decibels but retain the clarity. Additional information on custom-made earplugs may be obtained at a local hearing clinic.

Use a stick tray and avoid placing sticks or mallets on various instruments, as they may fall. When sharing a stick tray with others, be careful not to place too many items on it because they may audibly touch each other or fall. In addition to noise, it is confusing to reach for an implement on a cluttered stick tray during a performance.

Remove or cover buttons on concert uniforms to avoid contact sounds with cymbals.

In addition to practicing with a metronome on the beat, practice with it off the beat. This encourages you to focus on the metronome and strengthens your listening skills. It is one more step toward independence and steady time.

People learn in many different ways, so be aware of your own learning curve as you form practice habits: how often, how much, what time of day and so on. Try practicing in shorter periods of time and/or rotate your schedule. For instance: snare drum then cymbals then marimba, etc. When learning something new, practice slowly because your muscles are memorizing both correct and incorrect notes and motions. Once music is learned incorrectly, it is difficult to re-learn correctly.

If metal mallets (brass, aluminum etc.) are used on cymbals or crotales, be careful not to damage the instruments by overplaying them.

Practice until you lose focus then move on to something else. This keeps the mind fresh. Twenty hours of practice a day means nothing if you are carelessly replaying pieces. Similarly, treat all practice sessions as performance sessions to develop concentration and a performance mentality. For some, it is beneficial to practice entering a room, bowing and then performing. This allows you to become comfortable from the start of a performance.

Practice with different recordings and take note of such variables as tempo markings, and balance, etc. This will help when learning repertoire and it will facilitate audition preparation. Also, record practice sessions and run-throughs. This will aid in objectively assessing a performance or the progress of a piece.

Become familiar with contemporary notation. The more you read it, the greater your facility in performing it. Treat it like sight-reading and practice it every day.

When learning music, try "mental practicing". You will find that when you play the music with an instrument, it is as if you have played it before. Moreover, you can practice anywhere.

Use musical words such as "sounds" and "play" rather than "noise" and "hit". If we converse musically, we will be on our way to thinking musically.

What the performer hears is not what the audience hears. It is very important to have musicians in the audience during rehearsals, to listen to balance and nuance.

Realize that we will always be students. If you are in school now, remember that you will learn as much from your friends as from your teachers. Take advantage of this time to discuss percussion topics with your peers.

Join professional organizations such as the Percussive Arts Society (US), the National Association of Percussion Teachers (UK) and Percussion Creativ (GER). They are educational tools, which will keep you updated on current news and trends.

Musicality

Phrasing

It is my experience that when young percussionists are asked to sing a rhythmic line, they frequently sing the articulation of each note but not the duration. Perhaps this is because they traditionally begin music lessons studying only the snare drum. Subsequently, they practice on a snare drum or drum pad, both of which offer little or no duration. Whatever the reason, young percussionists should be offered a more thorough musical training similar to their peers on other instruments. This will help them think more musically and less percussively as well as lay the foundation for musical thinking and expression in the genre of multiple-percussion.

Because the traditional concept of melody and harmony is not usually associated with multiple-percussion, percussionists need to be highly aware of phrasing to enhance a musical idea. Means to enhance a musical idea include: bringing out the moving or principle line, giving direction to a line, emphasizing metric and rhythmic groupings and maintaining physical motion as long as there is sound audible to the audience.

Bringing out the moving or principle line is when the performer plays the principle line louder than the ostinato or slower moving part. This is desirable because the listener may hear the ostinato louder than the principle line because of the incessant repeated notes. This is illustrated in example number 6, where line A (the principle line) has syncopated rhythms on four tom-toms and line B (ostinato line) is on a tambourine.

Example 6. Letter A is the principle line and letter B is the ostinato.



In the case of a principle line occurring with a slower moving line, the principle line will show direction and motion whereas the latter will tend to sound sparse and perhaps lacking musical direction. This is illustrated in example number 7, where line A (the principle line) is a fast-moving triangle line and line B (slower line) is a slow moving suspended cymbal line.

Example 7. Letter A is the principle line and letter B is the slower line.



Giving direction to a line is accomplished by using a combination of slight variations in dynamics and tempo. It is up to the performer to determine the most effective means to enhance direction within the confines of a venue and the dynamics and tempo of a given passage.

Roll speed is another way to augment the direction of a line. It is a direct parallel to wind and bow speed. For most percussionists a roll is defined as an illusion of sustained sound. By varying the roll speed percussionists can emphasize tension with a fast roll speed or relaxation with a slow roll speed. Example 7 would be enhanced by varying the roll speeds.

When a performer emphasizes metric and rhythmic groupings it assists the audience in recognizing groupings, whereas groupings which are not emphasized tend to sound like an ostinato without the slightest hint of groupings. Metric groupings are most distinct when each macrobeat of the bar is emphasized, not accented. Rhythmic groupings are most distinct when the performer emphasizes the beginning of each beamed group regardless of the denomination. In the case of alla breve, notes of smaller denomination may be grouped together. Rhythmic groupings may transcend bar lines and is necessary when performing music without bar lines.

The asterisked notes in example 8 illustrate where a musician would place metric emphases in each bar line, and example 9 illustrates rhythmic emphases in music without bar lines.



Maintaining physical motion while the instruments are sounding is another way to convey a musical idea to the audience. If the music requires the percussionist to perform a legato passage with instruments possessing a long sustain, such as cymbals, then the motions made by the percussionist should be fluid and moving from one sound event to the next without stopping. This motion may be accomplished by using the rebound of one note as the preparation for the next. This motion is similar to the swing of a pendulum. Conversely, if the music is sparse and abrupt, then the motions should be sparse and abrupt. What the audience sees should correspond with what they hear.

Seven Simple Steps to Start Successful Snare Drummers

1. Snare Drum and Stand Selection

- a. What to look for when selecting a snare drum and stand
 - i. Shell Material
 1. Wood
 2. Metal
 3. Plastic
 - b. Types of snares and best uses for different situations
 - i. Cable
 - ii. Wire
 - iii. Plastic
 - iv. Gut
 - c. Head Characteristics
 - i. Thin
 - ii. Medium
 - iii. Thick

2. Stance

- a. A relaxed stance
- b. Finding the proper height

3. Sticks and Grips

- a. Parts of a stick
- b. Different types of sticks and their characteristics
 - i. Concert
 - ii. Marching
 - iii. Drumset
- c. How to select sticks
 - i. Roll
 - ii. Weight
 - iii. Sound
- d. Grips
 - i. Matched
 - ii. Traditional

4. Relaxed Motion

- a. Fluid motion exercise
- b. Wrist motion and amount of motion
- c. Arm motion and amount of motion
- d. Putting it all together

5. Playing Areas

- a. General playing area
- b. Sound quality at center and edge
- c. Traveling

6. Strokes

- a. Full, down, tap and up
- b. Audience participation

7. Rolls

- a. Double stroke roll
 - i. How to play and when to introduce to students
 1. Wrist doubles
 2. Bounce doubles
- b. Buzz Roll
 - i. How to play and when to introduce to students
 1. Single buzz with no wrist mvt.
 2. "Buzz" as a verbal teaching tool
 3. Triplet pulse alternating between single strokes and buzz
 - ii. Audience participation

In Conclusion

- a. Performance of Delecluse Etude #1
- b. Questions

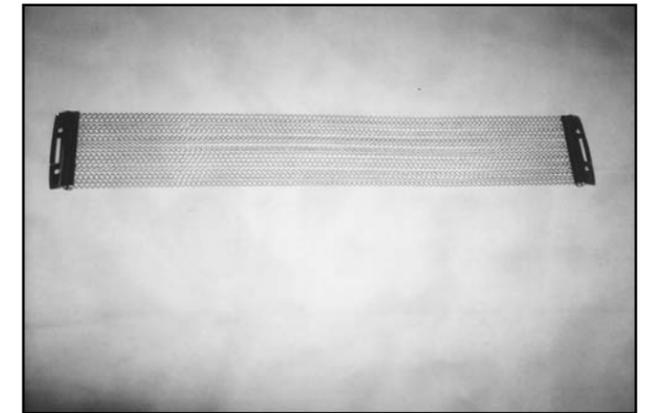
Your Snare Drum



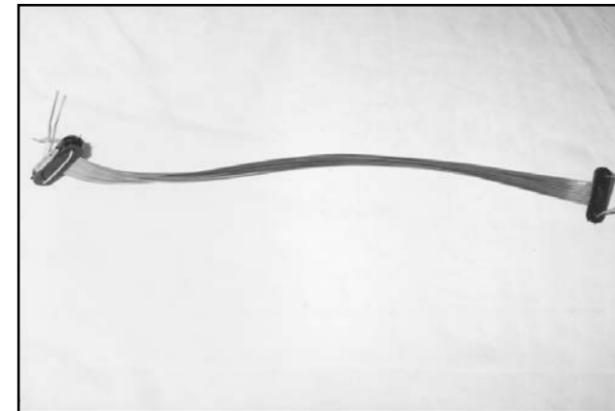
Snare Drum Snares



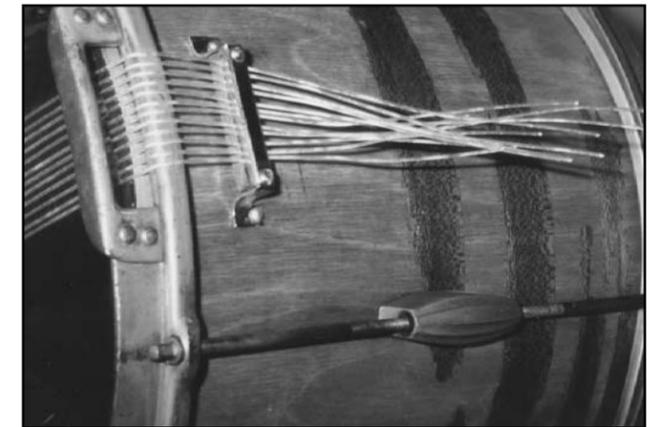
#1 – Cable Snares



#2 – Wire Snares



#3 – Plastic Snares



#4 – Gut Snares