

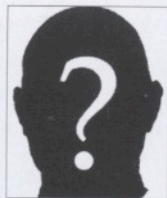
# Nebraska Music Educator

April, 2013 Vol. 71 No. 4

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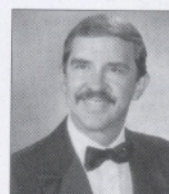
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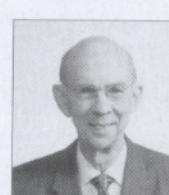
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Arthur Harrell\*  
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# Nebraska Music Educator

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## Departments

Executive Board .....	2	Music Education Week at the Capitol .....	26
Bulletin Board .....	4	In Memoriam .....	30
Executive Board Minutes .....	7	Elementary/General Music .....	32
President .....	10	Middle Level/Junior High .....	35
Immediate Past President .....	12	Corporate Sponsors .....	35
President Elect .....	14	Tri-M .....	36
Call for Performing Ensembles .....	16	College/University .....	38
Conference Hotel Listing .....	17	Research .....	40
NMEA Financial Info .....	19	Guest Article/Parker .....	43
Auditions .....	21	Guest Article/Hedgecoth .....	47
Awards .....	24	NSBA .....	50

## Advertisers

American College of Musicians .....	52	NET Radio .....	3
Chadron State College .....	15	Peru State College .....	34
Concordia University .....	IFC	Popplers Music .....	14
Dietze Music .....	48	Southeast Community College .....	41
Doane College .....	OBC, 46	Travel With Barb .....	37
Hastings College .....	6	University of Nebraska at Omaha .....	23, 39
Midland University .....	IBC	University of Nebraska Kearney .....	9, 21, 27, 45
Millard South High School .....	20	University of Nebraska-Lincoln .....	18, 29, 33, 42
National Association for Music Education .....	19, 40	University of South Dakota .....	13
Nebraska Percussive Arts .....	7	University of St. Thomas .....	36
Nebraska State Education Association .....	31	Wayne State College .....	5
Nebraska Wesleyan University .....	49	Yamaha .....	11

**On the front cover:** *The NMEA Presidents. NMEA is seeking candidates for the following positions: President Elect; Apprentice Chair, Auditions; Apprentice Chair, Band; and Apprentice Chair, Collegiate Members, Elementary/General Music Chair. If you are interested in any of these positions contact Rex Barker, Immediate Past President.*

The Nebraska Music Educators Association is a state federated unit of NA/ME National Association for Music Education, a voluntary, nonprofit organization representing all phases of music education in schools, colleges, universities, and teacher-education institutions. Active NA/ME/NMEA membership is open to all persons engaged in music teaching or other music educational work. The *Nebraska Music Educator* (ISSN 0732-1503), is issued to members (price included in dues) four times a year. Non-member subscription rates, \$20 per year. The *Educator* is published in August, October, February and April. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not represent an official position of the Nebraska Music Educators Association. Manuscripts and advertising material should be submitted directly to the Editor. Copy deadlines are: June 10, August 10, December 10 and February 10. Advertising space/copy deadlines are: June 10/July 1, August 10/September 1, December 10/January 1 and February 10/March 1. Mail out dates August 10, October 10, February 10, April 10. Published by Service Press, PO Box 606, Henderson, Nebraska 68371.





## Warm-up Concepts for the Young Percussionist

I have visited many band rehearsals at the high school and middle school level. As a percussionist, I am keenly aware of what is appropriate for our developing percussionist to prepare prior to the start of a rehearsal, that is, assuming all the necessary instruments are set-up and ready to be played. Warm-ups can run the gamut from playing their favorite loud snare drum, timpani, or mallet passage to striking every piece of equipment that has been set-up just to see if it works! The variety of warm-ups is absolutely amazing. Most directors have rules and guidelines established for their percussionists prior to rehearsal starting, but I don't think warming-up is addressed from a *concept* point of view. As I take my college music majors through our Percussion Techniques class, I become aware of the concepts I want them to apply to the music they are performing so they can develop as independent learners versus "show me how it goes" students.

Concept-based warm-ups (beyond the ensemble warm-ups that often occur in most band programs) can assist with the techniques that do not hold the interest or develop the young percussionist at fast enough pace to keep their interest. The concept based warm-ups also address the balance issue between the various areas of percussion; thus allowing the director greater comfort in assigning parts based upon the knowledge and experience within the section.

This article address the concepts of warming-up to incorporate and connect areas that exist for the three main areas (Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, and Timpani). I am limiting the areas covered in order to establish a foundation that can be expanded on in the future.

### Snare Drum

It is very easy to incorporate a warm-up concept into the area of snare drum. Rudiments are a given with the five majors areas - singles, double, paradiddles, flams, drags, and of course their hybrids. I want to narrow it down to the following two concepts for warming-up on snare drum: 1) Utilizing the singles and doubles strokes with a variety of sticking patterns and stroke heights at different tempos and 2) developing control of the Multiple Bounce Roll in relation to the singles and doubles at different tempos.

The first can be used in conjunction with a passage from an excerpt from a band piece, solo/ensemble piece or a percussion method book. For example, George Stone's snare drum book "Stick

groupings of 8-4-2-1 counts alternating between Singles, Doubles, Singles, and Multiples strokes (SDSM for short). I also use a three-note pattern (8<sup>th</sup> note triplets) with the same grouping above and alternating between SDSM (Figure 1).

This exercise can be incorporated at various tempos into an ensemble warm-up or a required warm-up for all percussionists prior to a rehearsal. This warm-up forces the issue of developing a smooth and consistent roll sound.

### Keyboard Percussion

With covering singles and doubles in the snare drum warm-up, we are more concerned about moving from note to note on the keyboard percussion instruments. It is the hope that the evenness

on one drum will transfer to multiple surfaces from a warming-up standpoint. Scales, arpeggios, chords and related techniques are necessary evils for the young percussionist to explore. So the warm-up concepts for keyboard percussion are focused on these aspects as it relates to two-mallet and four-mallet playing.

The warm-up for two-mallet playing will focus

on the sound, playing area, and fluidity. The warm-up would focus on one key signature at a time; thus this can be done in short period of time (note: of course we need to address all of the related scales and chords for that key when possible - natural minor, harmonic minor, dorian minor, melodic minor, and major/minor pentatonic). The warm-up can also be used with the ensemble warm-ups based upon assigned key signatures. The two-mallet warm-up incorporates a series of exercises performed over a two-octave range utilizing 8<sup>th</sup> notes at moderate tempo (quarter note @ 75-80) ascending and

Figure 1: SDSM exercise for Snare Drum

Don Parker

Multiple Roll is produced by a controlled bounce of 3 or more strokes per sixteenth note.

Control" will keep your percussionist busy for a lifetime with a variety of sticking patterns with the overall goal of creating evenness between the hands. The opening pages of 8<sup>th</sup> notes offer the young percussionist a challenge when various tempos are incorporated. An assignment of a grouping of these exercises could serve as a creativity warm-up beyond the normal.

The second concept of controlling the Multiple Bounce Roll is important for developing the touch required for concert performance. I utilize an exercise that takes a four-note pattern (16<sup>th</sup> notes) in

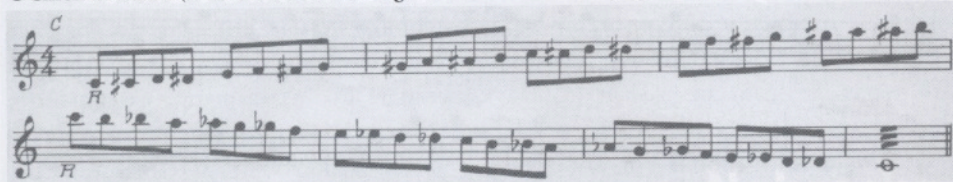


descending whenever possible. The exercises are as follows: 1) two octave scales alternating 2) two octave arpeggio broken (based upon scale degree -1358, 3581, 5813, 1358 and reverse descending) 3) two octave arpeggio (1358358 and reverse descending) 4) three-note pattern (123, 234, etc.) 5) four-note pattern (1234, 2345, etc.), 6) five-note pattern (12345) using alternating single strokes and double stops, and 7) chromatic scale (Figure 2).

In addition to the eighth note pattern

Figure 2:

C Chromatic Scale (from Morris Goldenberg, "Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, and Vibraphone")



above, the chromatic scale could be played in eighth note triplets and sixteenth notes as well as started with the left hand to offer some additional challenges.

It should be noted that many percussion method books incorporate the scales and patterns that I have discussed. For example the five-note pattern described above is related to the exercises from Lesson One of G.H. Green's "Instruction Course for Xylophone" (See Figure 3). The sources are only limited by your creativity to expose your students. It would be possible to change the warm-up by reversing the warm-up to start with descending portion of the exercises. This would be a real check to see if you know the key signature or if you are working off rote motion or feel!

The second part of the warm-up for Keyboard Percussion involves four-mallet technique. The idea of utilizing one key signature is still apart of this warm-up; thus there can be a flow from two to four-mallet playing. The concepts that are used

in warm-up for four-mallet technique are as follows: 1) double verticals, 2) double vertical rolling 3) single independent strokes 4) single alternating strokes and 5) combinations of the above.

I utilize a variety of exercises to develop these techniques separately with my students, but there is one exercise that comes from Leigh Howard Stevens' book "Method of Movement". Each mallet is given a number from the bottom up 1 thru 4 (see Figure 4).

The two exercises for the warm-up

on keyboard percussion can be performed back to back if the appropriate inside mallets (depending on the chosen grip) are utilized for the two-mallet exercise while holding the other two mallets. This would assist in developing the strength to hold the mallets as well as control their use for the future.

Figure 3:  
Exercises from Lesson One from "Instruction Course for Xylophone" by G.H. Green

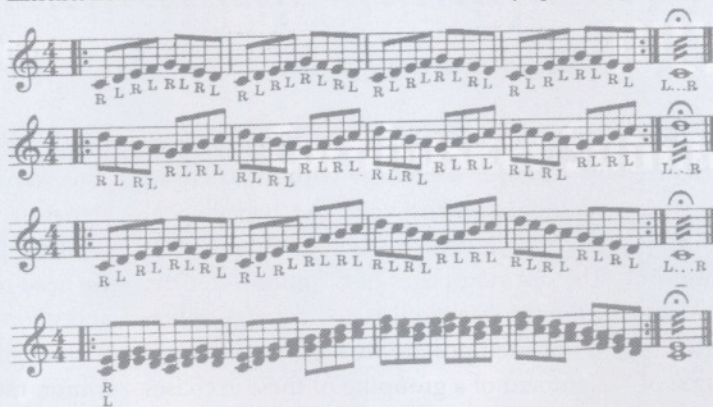
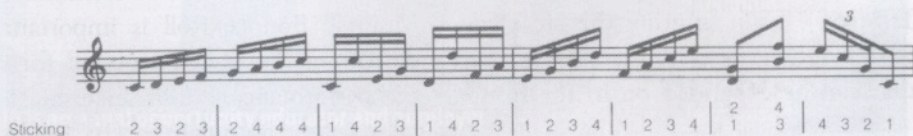


Figure 4:

Fundamental Strokes Exercise of Four Mallet Marimba Technique by L.H. Stevens



## Timpani

The last area for warm-up incorporates many of the techniques from the above two categories. The strokes, the sticking, and the fluidity from the snare drum warm-ups and the various pitch combinations from the two and four-mallet warm-ups lets us focus on the tone based upon the larger playing area and moving between 2 and 4 drums. The concepts on warm-up would be focused on the following areas: 1) Legato strokes, 2) Staccato strokes 3) Developing Roll sound (metered and non metered) 4) Sticking Patterns (alternating, shifting, and crossing over 2, 3, and 4 drums) 5) Muffling.

The exercise for warming-up on timpani is definitely focused on tone, technique, and movement across the drums. There are three parts to the timpani warm-up. The first part deals with groupings of 8-4-2-1 counts (in 8<sup>th</sup> notes) playing alternating singles between two drums, three drums, or four drums, depending on the available drums. The pitch for the drums can be related to interval of a perfect 4<sup>th</sup>, perfect 5<sup>th</sup> or the arpeggio with repeated octave. This part focuses on movement using both legato stroke and staccato strokes.

The second part of the timpani warm-up focuses on developing the single stroke roll taking the groupings of 8-4-2-1 counts (in 16<sup>th</sup> notes and 8<sup>th</sup> note triplets) to develop the metered roll moving between the two drums (29" and 26") with the use of the metronome. The non-metered roll can be worked on based upon an 8 count crescendo roll and decrescendo roll on each drum on all available drums.



The last part of the timpani warm-up focuses on the short exercises that can be memorized from Raynor Carroll's book "Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for Timpani" dealing with alternating shifting, and crossing sticking (see Figure 5).

There are numerous exercises from Carroll's book that can be used in different rhythmic configurations that the sticking can be practiced as needed. The choice of exercise and tempo can be based upon the music being performed in band rehearsal. This last part of the timpani warm-up could be addressed via the timpani part in the music being rehearsed.

In summary the warm-up concepts for snare drum, keyboard percussion and timpani present an opportunity to expand the development of the young per-

**Figure 5:**  
Exercises for Alternating Shifting and Cross Sticking from "Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for the Timpani" by Raynor Carroll



cussionist beyond the typical warm-ups associated with band rehearsal. It should be noted that warming up in one area address a particular skill that is transferable to other areas of percussion; thus eliminating time that might be required on the additional instrument. For example, working on singles stroke on snare drum with a metronome will eliminate the need for warming up on a tambourine in the same manner; the focus will be more on producing a good sound based upon placement. The hope is that these

warm-ups will lead to additional practice that goes beyond the band room for your students. I would like to challenge current and future band directors to pull percussion excerpts from their concert scores for festival and contest to reinforce the concepts discussed above and make the connection for warm-

ing up with these types of examples.

### End Notes

- <sup>i</sup> Pg. 5-7 Stone, George; *Stick Control*
- <sup>ii</sup> Pg. 24, Morris Goldenberg, *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, and Vibraphone*
- <sup>iii</sup> Pg 6-7, Eyles Randy ed. Green, George H. *Instruction Course for Xylophone*
- <sup>iv</sup> Pg. 24, Stevens, Leigh H. *Method of Movement*
- <sup>v</sup> Pg. 46, *Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for the Timpani* by Raynor Carroll

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**Don N. Parker** serves as Associate Professor of Music-Percussion and Music Coordinator at Fayetteville State University. In 2011, he served as the guest conductor for The HBCU-NBDC All-Star Percus-

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Prior to FSU, Parker taught at the University of Missouri - St. Louis, Chadron State College (Nebraska) and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Parker has a

B.M. in Performance and Music Business from DePauw University and a M.M. and D.M.A. in Percussion Performance from the University of Texas in Austin. Parker has endorsements with Sabian Cymbals, Mapex Drums, Mike Balter Mallets, Regal Tip Sticks, Remo World Percussion, LP Music Group, and Majestic Percussion.

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