

John Bingaman

Building Firm Foundations for the Beginning Percussionist

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Virtual Education Series

Featuring:

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I. Finding the Right Percussion Students

The Beginning Percussion Class

- Plays a large part in the professional emotional health of the percussion instructor
- Means new beginnings for the program

Testing Date Options

1. Testing students concurrently with wind instrument fittings
2. Testing students separately by appointment

My Audition Process (Two Rounds)

- Set an audition date for at least a week before the wind instrument fittings
- Consider having an additional first round tester for the load
- Use Sign-Up Genius or a comparable program to make an appointment schedule
- Make sure percussion audition information and that link is emailed to 5th (or 6th grade) parents along with your email address

Auditions are individual only. There should be a strong focus on consistency including verbiage, tempo, sequence, and even inflection. This more than anything else facilitates fairness and accuracy.

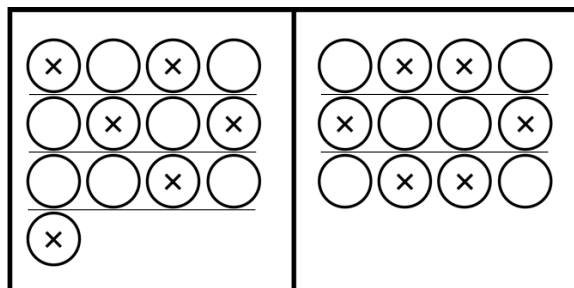
First Round Audition

- Parents usually come in
- Have the kids hold sticks and start to play. Look for natural rebound.
- Have them play along with music to test for natural pulse (**VERY IMPORTANT**)
- Coordination between hands and foot tap
- I play, you play
- Determine lack of understanding vs lack of ability
- Announce the results by email

Second Round Audition

- Parents do not come in
- Same as first round but more difficult pulse and coordination examples
- I play, you play (include more elements such as upbeats, triplets, compound meter)
- Mallets
- Circles and Xs (see the diagram below)

Circles and Xs



Things to Strongly Consider

- Perception and performance of time
- Coordination
- Natural Hands
- Dominant vs non-dominant hand
- Eye contact and Attentiveness
- Maturity and Self Control
- Ability to receive instruction and make correction
- Grit
- Grades and Citizenship

Communication of Results

1. Congratulations on making percussion. You will not need to attend the wind instrument fitting. There will be a meeting soon to discuss percussion moving forward. ***Do not make any purchases at this time.***
2. Thank you for attending the percussion auditions. Your student did not make percussion. They will need to attend the wind instrument fitting on/at/from/to

Beginner Percussion Pack: Points of Consideration

- Pads back and forth (need an equipment bag) or school set of pads (only mallet bag)
- Bell kit (included) or practice marimba (rented)
- Don't forget the music stand for home
- What book are you going to use?

My Pack (Click and Buy)

- Quiet Tone pad (stays home)
- Snare stand with a memory lock (stays home)
- Music stand (stays home)
- Stick bag
- Concert sticks
- Marimba mallets
- Timpani mallets
- Metronome

Do not send out the information about the packs yet.

Spring Meeting

Equipment, timeline, expectations, summer dos and don'ts

- Sign-In sheet
- Congratulations
- Equipment purchase cost and validity (Beginner Pack); Marimba rental (if applicable)
- What to do and not do over the summer
- Camp (if applicable)
- Lessons

After the meeting, send an email with links and documents for equipment. Receive equipment at the school and distribute it at a time of your choosing. Unpack and label everything, and discuss proper care and handling.

II. Ready to Play!...Almost

Metronome

- Start seated
- Identify downbeats and upbeats
- Foot Tap with downbeats. *First opportunity to hold a standard.*

Hinge and Hands

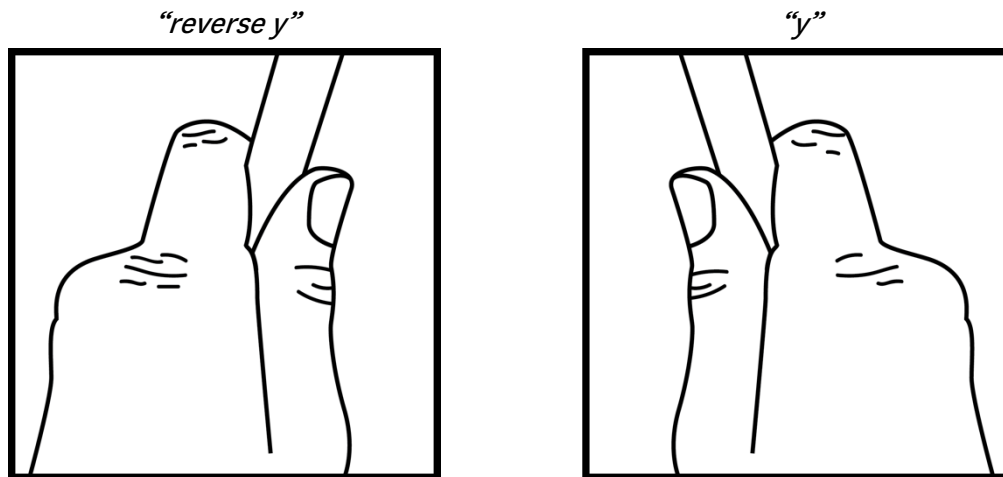
- Introduce door knock hinge
- Seated position with elbows in line with body and not too far away
- Play on legs with hands, slow at first, staying relaxed the entire time
- No tempo

Equipment and Workspace Set-Up

- Dots
- Tape
- Memory locks

Holding the Stick

1. Identify parts of the stick and then find $\frac{1}{3}$ distance from the butt of the stick. Identify this as the balance point.
2. Form a fulcrum. "Thumb print" the stick. *Explain what a fulcrum is and how it functions.* Look for the "y" and "reverse y." (see the diagram below)



3. *Hold* the stick in one place and *touch* the stick everywhere else.
4. Remaining fingers gently wrap around the stick
5. Stick should be resting in the "brake" of the hand
6. Make sure that hands are symmetrical.

The Stroke

1. Identify the right and left "dots" or beating spots on the pad.
2. Develop the sensations of pivoting and rebound.
3. Trace the path of the stick slowly to the up position and then back to the dot position.
4. Raise to the up position and attempt rebound/full strokes.
5. Try with the Right Hand and Left Hand
6. Explain the Double Stop. Attempt double stop rebound strokes.
7. Dot games

Constant Motion vs. Isolated Motion

- How to differentiate
- How to develop
- Tacet hand up and down

III. Snare Drum

Setting Up Your Class

- Set an expectation for the time they should be set up.
- Seating (semi-circle), and Order
- Music stands should be low and angled so that hands are visible.
- How to set sticks down

Rebound Strokes in Time

Put your foot with the metronome and your hands with your feet.

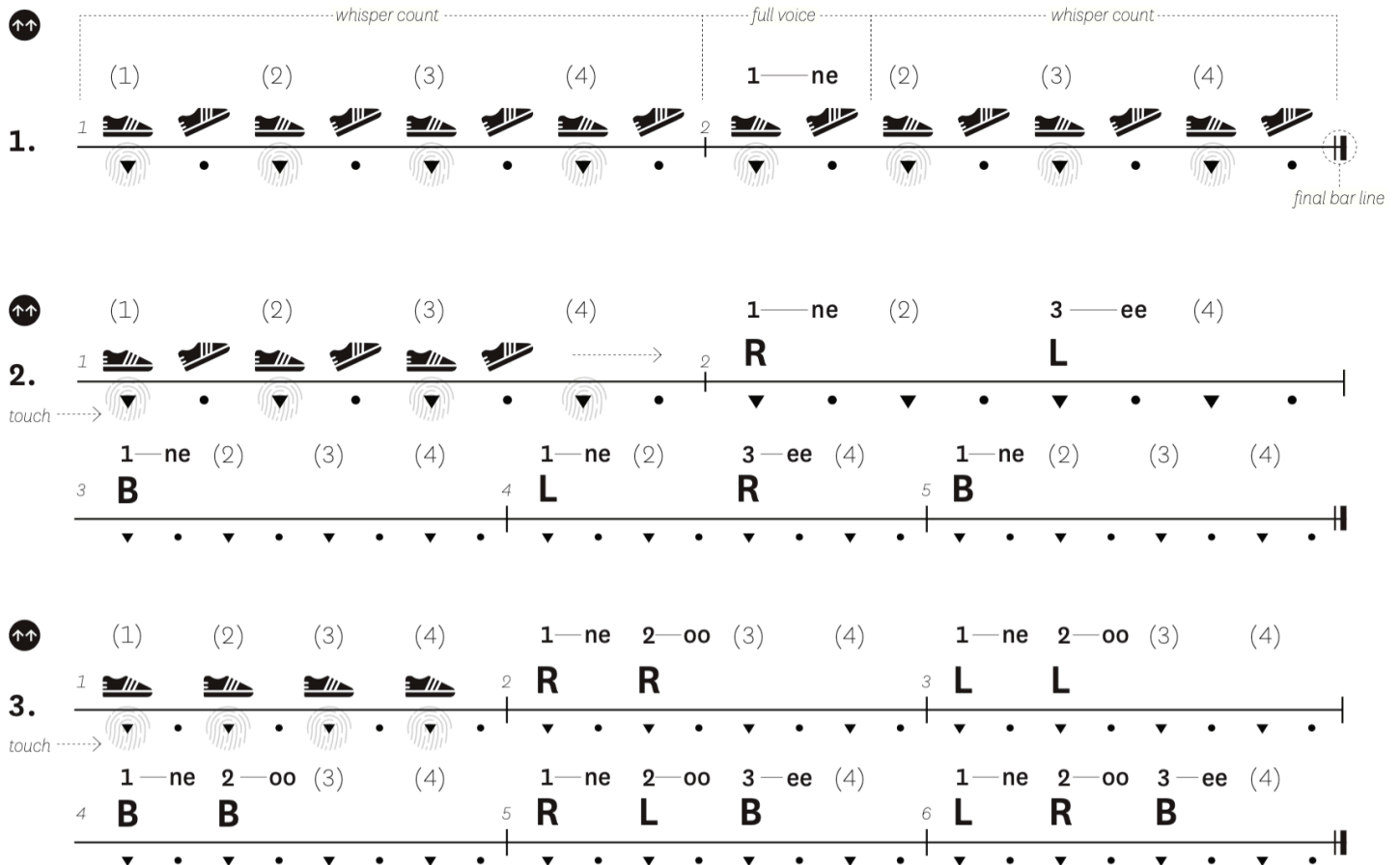
- Foot Tap
- Finger Tap
- Counting and Pulsing
- Playing

Diagram illustrating rebound strokes in time, divided into three sections (1, 2, 3) with corresponding foot and hand patterns.

Section 1: Shows a sequence of foot taps (1-4) and hand strokes (1-4) with a "whisper count" and "full voice" section. The final bar line is indicated.

Section 2: Shows a sequence of foot taps (1-4) and hand strokes (1-4) with a "touch" section. The sequence includes "1—ne", "2", "3—ee", and "4".

Section 3: Shows a sequence of foot taps (1-4) and hand strokes (1-4) with a "touch" section. The sequence includes "1—ne", "2—oo", "3—ee", and "4".







1:1 Note Ratio

1 note for every 1 beat. Hear the upbeats between the downbeats.

continue full beat counting ----->

(1) (2) (3) (4) 1—ne 2—oo 3—ee 4—ore 1 2 3 4

1     2 R R R R 3 L L L L

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1

4 R R R R 5 L L L L 6 B B B B 7 R L R L 8 R

Quarter Rest Example Lines, #7

1 2 3 4 5



R L L L R R L R L R L R

Timeline for Class

- Practice cards are turned in on Mondays
- Tests happen on Mondays
- DTRs (Down the Rows) happen during the week

2:1 Note Ratio

2 notes for every 1 beat. First introduced like this:

R R



constant motion

8 on a Hand



R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R

Broken 8s

Emphasizes hand speed and transitions between hands. See the black stickings in 8 on a Hand above.

Eight, Four, Two



R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R

Independence: The Beginning

- One hand is moving while the other is not
- Adding and taking hands away while playing

Double Stops

2:1 Transitions

Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of a 2D lattice of particles (B, L, R) over time steps 1, 2, 3, and te (4). The diagrams are arranged in two columns, with three rows each. The left column (1, 3, 5) shows a single row of particles, while the right column (2, 4, 6) shows a single column of particles. Arrows indicate the direction of movement between steps.

Left Column (Single Row):

- Diagram 1:** Row of particles: B, B, B, B, R, R. Arrows point down from each particle.
- Diagram 3:** Row of particles: R, R, R, R, B, B. Arrows point down from each particle.
- Diagram 5:** Row of particles: R, B, B, B, B, L. Arrows point down from each particle.

Right Column (Single Column):

- Diagram 2:** Column of particles: B, B, B, L, L. Arrows point left from each particle.
- Diagram 4:** Column of particles: L, L, L, L, B, B. Arrows point left from each particle.
- Diagram 6:** Column of particles: L, B, B, B, B, R. Arrows point left from each particle.

8 on a Hand Double Stops

4/4

B B B B R R R R | B B B B L L L L | B B B B R R R R | B B B B L L L L :|| B R

Self and Peer Evaluation

The most important thing that we teach students is awareness.

- Enables students to give and take constructive criticism
- Makes them accountable to themselves and each other
- Creates **awareness** and, eventually, **intent**
- Gives **value** to certain skills and work ethic





Double Articulating Instrument

- Singles
- Buzzes

The Next Step to Independence: Filling In

1:1 Filled-In Builder

1 (1) (2) (3) (4) 1—ne 2—oo 3—ee 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4)

1 H 4/4     2 R R R R L 3 R

4 1—ne 2—oo 3 te 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4) 1—ne 2 te 3 te 4 te

4 H R R R L R L 5 R 6 R R L R L R L

7 1—ne (2) (3) (4) 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te 1—ne (2) (3) (4)

7 H R 8 R L R L R L R L 9 R

Eighth Note Example Lines, #2



Instruction can be staggered using notation.

Duets

- Develop musical independence
- Create a deeper understanding of note relationships
- Teach and develop **vertical alignment**
- FUN!

Eighth Note Training Duet



Ties

- Missing from percussion pedagogy
- Teach subdivision
- Reinforce note relationships
- Make certain notes much easier to learn

Tie Example Line



Approaching Stickings

- Toe tap
- Groupings
- Perspective



Offset Trainer

Create situations where students have to be able to do what you're telling them to do.

Offset Trainer Steps

1. Play every note but omit the counting of the optional notes
2. Count every note but omit the playing of the optional notes
3. Omit the counting and playing of the optional notes
4. Bonus Step: Follow the last step but count only downbeats

1:1 Offset Trainer

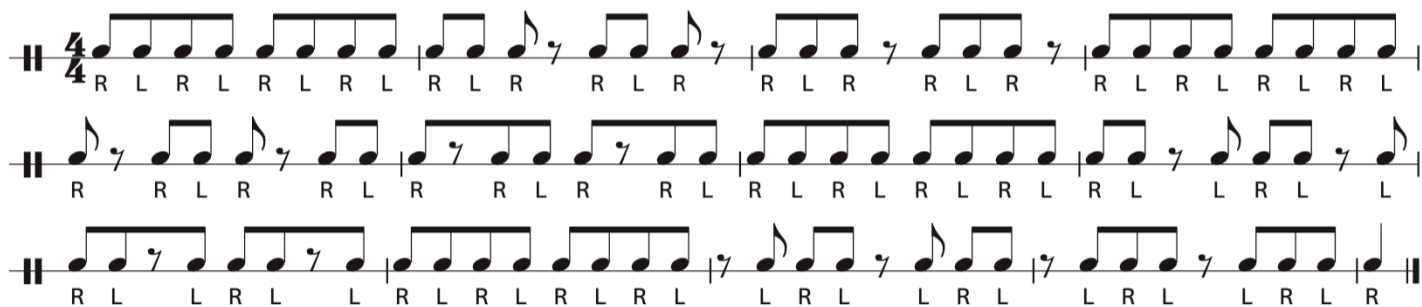


Benefits

- Develops verbal independence
- Teaches partials
- Makes rhythms more accurate and cultivates a better understanding
- Encourages the student to think of the rhythm correctly

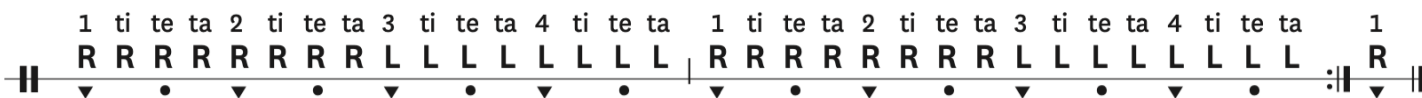
Notation, Builders, and Permutations

Eighth Note Timing (3 Note)



8 on a Hand (Sixteenth Notes)

It is effective to single articulate new rhythms.



8 on a Hand Inverted (Sixteenth Notes)



2:1 Filled-In Builder

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff has a 2:1 time signature change to 2/4. The second staff has a 2:1 time signature change to 2/4. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes with 'R' and 'L' labels below them.

Sixteenth Note Partner Exercise

Player 1

Player 2

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff is for Player 1 and the second for Player 2. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes with 'R' and 'L' labels below them.

Sixteenth Note Training Duet

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes with 'R' and 'L' labels below them. The exercise is divided into five measures, with the first measure starting with a '1' and the last measure ending with a '5'.

Coordination Exercise

Coordination is an integral part of developing percussion skills. Some rhythms and skills are difficult for students not because they don't understand them, but because they lack the coordination to execute them.

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes with 'R' and 'L' labels below them.

Sixteenth Timing (3 Note)

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes with 'R' and 'L' labels below them.

Developing a Personal Warm-Up

long buzzes speed up buzz roll

bounces two bounces

constant motion slow down isolated strokes single stroke roll

Diddles: Things to Consider

- Develop over time
- Emphasize space between notes with subdivision
- Recovery is extremely important
- Diddles need a little weight behind them (no arm cast)
- Sequence the skills

Diddle Progression Step Two

Playing at Different Heights

1. Play at stagnant heights/angles
2. Work to maintain a great sound at lower heights
3. Develop the crescendo

first time
second time

15'

4. Develop the decrescendo

first time
second time

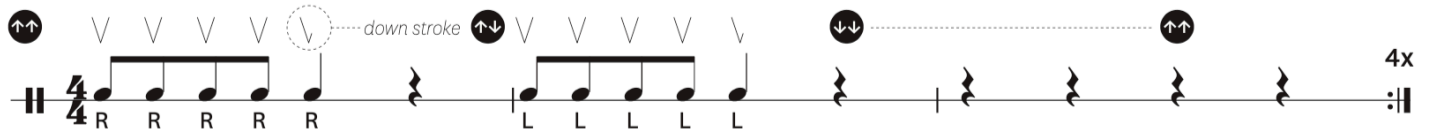
15'

Exploring Different Strokes

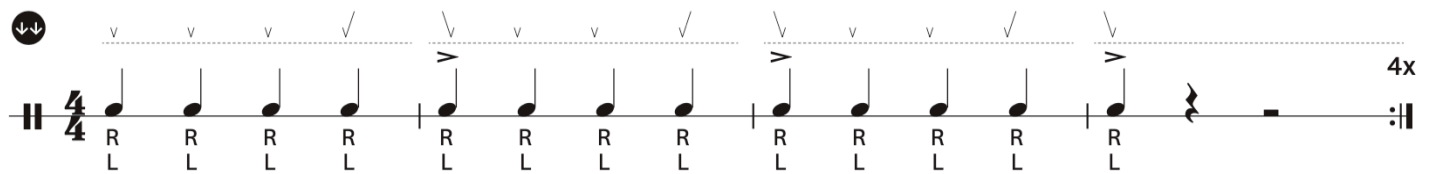
- Develop specific mechanics when learning a new stroke
- Tune your highs and lows
- Develop a high level of contrast

How many things are being learned at once? How many aspects are involved? Can those aspects be scaffolded?

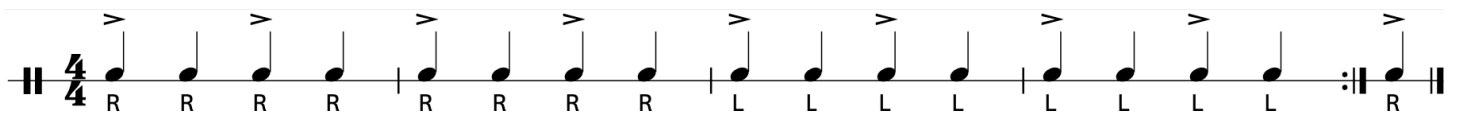
Down Stroke Exercise



Up/Down Exercise



Bucks



Getting From the Academic to the Actual

IV. Mallets

Musical Alphabet

- Recite forwards and backwards
- View horizontal and vertical
- Apply to the staff
- Apply to the instrument

Musical Alphabet: Horizontal

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

Musical Alphabet: Vertical

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
G	A	B	C	D	E	F
F	G	A	B	C	D	E
E	F	G	A	B	C	D
D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C	D	E	F	G	A	B
B	C	D	E	F	G	A
A	B	C	D	E	F	G

The Instrument

- Musical Alphabet
- Bars, resonators, frame, height adjustment
- Nodal points
- Playing areas

Piston Stroke

- 1/3 up the mallet
- Mimics rebound stroke

Playing the Instrument

- Correct height
- No toe tap
- No unnecessary movement with feet

The First Step: Playing Individual Keys

True Accuracy = Correct Notes + Correct Playing Zones

1. Locate white keys by using black keys as a reference

E and F in Relation to Black Notes

E is to the right of the 2 black notes.



F is to the left of the 3 black notes.



2. Play “white keys” with names
3. Play “black keys” without names

Use Half Steps as the first interval study to give the “black keys” names and some “white keys” alternate names. Develop a language with the kids that facilitates learning.

X and Y Axis

Shifting

- Encourages forward thinking on the instrument
- Develops muscle memory on distances between the notes
- Makes players more accurate

Shifting While Playing Repeated Strokes

1. Chromatically
2. 4 on each note
3. 2 on each note
4. Octaves
5. 1 of each note one hand at a time

Four Notes Each

A musical exercise consisting of three staves of music in 4/4 time, each starting with a treble clef. The first staff begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff contains measures 9 through 13. Each measure contains four eighth notes. Dashed arrows labeled "shift" indicate shifts at the beginning of measures 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13. In measures 1, 5, and 9, the first two notes are beamed together. Below the first staff, the letters "R" and "L" are written under the first and second notes of measures 1 and 2, with horizontal arrows pointing right from each pair. Below the second staff, the text "-- shift ->" appears twice. Below the third staff, the text "-- shift ->" appears twice. The exercise ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 13.

Students should be able to cover a two-octave range from one spot. This will greatly improve their “accuracy radius.”

Tetrachords

- Build the mechanics of scales in smaller chunks
- Opportunity for faster corrections on playing areas, stroke, and note accuracy
- Teach starting hand positions (both “white keys,” both “black keys,” staggered)
- Create scales quickly
- Quickly teach Circle of Fourths



Major Scales and Arpeggios

- Play off the Left Hand and Right Hand
- Arpeggios in quarters, then 8ths
- Stand in the middle of each scale (change standing position)



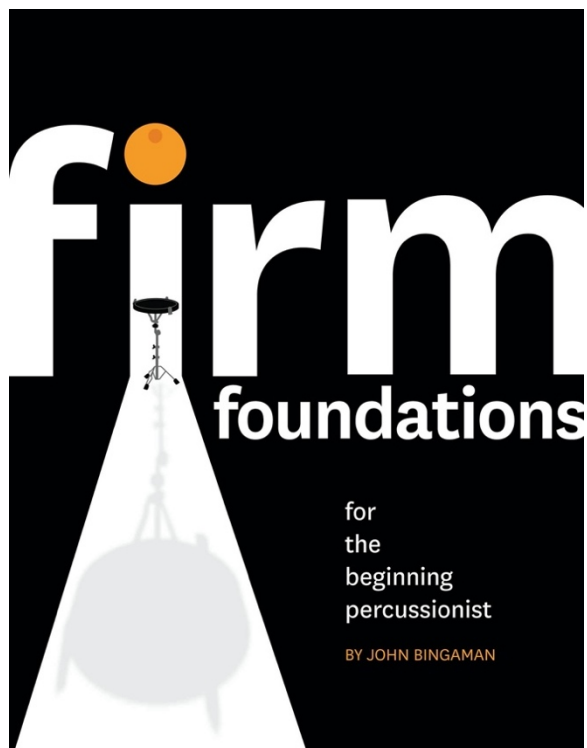
Reading and Playing Mallets

- Music stand should be low and close to the keyboard
- Read and play “black keys” first
- After, read and play “white keys”
- One Step Reading: Adjacent Space or Line
- Focus on Up = Right, Down = Left
- All mistakes are not created equal

More Important Technical Skills

- Thirds
- Green
- Two octave scales

Higher Starting Points = Higher Finishing Points



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