

# **An introduction to drum stick and 2-mallet technique.**

*A step by step approach to playing the “natural” or “full” **single** stroke on snare drum and most percussion instruments by Peter Saleh. v.1/12*

## **The Grip** – *Proper placement of the stick/mallet in the hand*

- 1) Primary control is achieved with the *thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> knuckle* of the index finger (aka the ‘**Fulcrum**’)  
\*The fulcrum is placed 1/3 of the way from the base of the stick/mallet. On Vic Firth Sticks, this position is marked by the flag graphic.  
\*\*The thumb is straight, pointed towards the bead, and centered on the stick.
- 2) The rest of the fingers should curl gently around the stick so that the finger tips point back towards the palm.
- 3) The grip should let the stick act and function as a relatively straight extension of the forearm. For KPI, it will be slightly less straight.  
\*Because of this, the back couple of fingers (ring and pinky) will be least responsible for gripping the stick.
- 4) Allow a tiny bit of space for the stick to play within the palm.

## **Playing Position** – *How to set yourself up to play (aka ‘**set position**’)*

- 1) Center the body in front of the instrument and music stand. (For KPI: center on the range of notes needed for the music you are playing).
- 2) Space the feet approximately shoulder width apart (or on both pedals, if at a drum set)
- 3) Upper body, shoulders, and forearms should remain ‘athletically relaxed’ and in a natural position
- 4) Keep the forearms and palms low and a bit above parallel to the playing surface.
- 5) At the fulcrum point, the downward facing portion of the stick should be visible.
- 6) **For KPI**, this includes all of the positioning and grip check points with the mallets/sticks above the starting pitch and at the appropriate starting height.

## **The Stroke** – *Moving the stick or mallet.*

- 1) Make sure both the correct grip and position are intact.
- 2) Stay Relaxed! Tension will only impede development
- 3) Each stroke should initiate from the wrist and follow through with the fingers.
- 4) Move the tip of the stick first, followed by the hand. **For drums:** Occasionally, the first note can be prepared by a small lifting of the wrist just before the first note.
- 5) **For snare drum/drum set**, start with the sticks down. The fingers stay in contact & accelerate the stick down. For basic single strokes, the first knuckle of the index finger should remain relatively still. **Air behind the stick** (space b/t butt of stick and palm) is a good thing.
- 6) **For KPI**, the wrist will ‘pop’ up slightly when the stick goes down. Don’t waste motion by lifting past the starting height. *Pick a starting height and stick with it!*
- 7) The stick should follow a straight path down and bounce/rebound back up. For KPI, shift in a curved path over the next pitch, using the momentum of the previous stroke.
- 8) Use only as much tension as you need to maintain control. Efficient single strokes will slide in and out of a firm grip. If you want something to bounce, you must let go of it!
- 9) Use a stroke that accelerates down to the surface and slows down as it returns.
- 10) **For KPI:** For general playing zones, strike the naturals over the resonator rail (towards the accidentals) and the accidentals on the very edge of the bar, avoiding the node.