

# IMEA Jr. High Percussion Etudes

## Helpful Tips for a Successful Audition

By: Vern Spevak and Glen Schneider

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a journey to excellence in the percussive arts. By preparing this years Jr. High IMEA Percussion Etudes, you are taking a big step toward becoming a first rate music student and performer. The fact that you now hold this piece of paper in front of you means you are serious about your musicianship. We are very excited about percussion too, so let us help you in your preparation with a few easy pointers...

Here's a couple of general tips:

- 1.) If you have a private instructor (outside of school) be sure to discuss your desire to audition for IMEA with them. Be sure to show your teacher all of the required etudes. A good percussion teacher can quickly outline what is important and what is not. This will help you to be efficient with your practice time.
- 2.) Equipment. Be sure to use the correct sticks and mallets. General purpose orchestral sticks (Firth SDI Generals work great) should be used for snare drum. Do not use drumset or marching percussion sticks! Marimba mallets should be medium yarn. Use medium yarn because we want your rolls to be smooth and connected. Vibes should use med cord wound mallets. Xylophone mallets should have rubber mallet heads (avoid hard plastic).

Here's some specific pointers, categorized by instruments:

### SNARE DRUM (Even and Odd Years)

- 1.) In most cases, use *hand to hand* sticking, unless marked otherwise. Rolls should be tight buzz rolls (no lumps). Sixteenth notes with a slash through the stem should be played as a "diddle" (clean articulated 32<sup>nd</sup> notes with one hand). This is also sometimes referred to as playing the rolls "open". We would really like to hear you demonstrate tight buzz rolls and open diddle rolls in the etudes, so please remember these two distinctions.
- 2.) You do not need to play the etudes with a metronome, but you will score better if you perform them at the suggested tempos.
- 3.) Use the correct playing zone of the snare drum. Use the outer edge for softer dynamics and the center region of the drum for louder levels.
- 4.) Play accents where they are written. Equally important is to not play accents where they do not exist.
- 5.) Matched grip is probably your best choice for playing these orchestral styled etudes (discuss this with your teacher). You will not be penalized if you use a different grip.

## TIMPANI (Even and Odd Years)

- 1.) Use whatever grip is comfortable (German, French, American etc.) The grip you choose is not as important as the sound you produce, so make sure both hands are held the same way and strive for an even sound, with a clear tone.
- 2.) Sticking should be logical and make sense. Start by going hand to hand and then make alterations to produce a good solid performance which includes dynamics and accents.
- 3.) Play the correct zone of the drum to produce a good, full tone (around 5" to 6" from the edge is a good place to start).
- 4.) Dampen notes (using the opposite hand) to demonstrate your ability to articulate rhythms and note lengths correctly. As a general rule of thumb, 8<sup>th</sup> notes should be dampened on the following 8<sup>th</sup> rest, with quarter notes being dampened on the following quarter rest, etc. Pitches should not be allowed to *smash into one another*.
- 5.) Your roll speed should be adjusted to the size of the drum you are playing. The purpose of the timpani roll is to sustain the pitch, not to play a rhythm. On smaller timpani you must roll *slightly faster* than on larger timpani. Make sure that you don't press the timpani mallet into the head of the drum when you play (don't stop the sound). The drum must always vibrate freely. Let the drum "breathe" to produce a good tone and correct pitch.
- 6.) You do not need to play the etudes with a metronome, but you will score better if you perform them at the suggested tempos.

## MARIMBA (Even and Odd Years)

- 1.) Use a relaxed grip, especially at the fulcrum. You do not want to play tense and choke off your sound.
- 2.) Hand to hand sticking should be used unless it makes sense to alter it. If you have had a piano background and you are new to mallet percussion, don't try to play "right hand heavy". Balance the load between left and right stick strokes.
- 3.) Utilize a good "piston stroke" when you play. A mallet percussion instrument does not produce any type of natural rebound when you hit it. This rebound must be reproduced manually, so make sure the stick comes back up after every stroke. Your sticks should effortlessly glide across the instrument as you play. Avoid a crude hammering motion when performing.
- 4.) Roll smoothly, at reasonable speed. Remember that the purpose of the roll is to sustain the pitch of the key. Listen to the sound you produce and make musical adjustments for a good tone on the instrument.
- 5.) You do not need to play the etudes with a metronome, but you will score better if you perform them at the suggested tempos.

*Good Luck !*

# District 9 Jr. High IMEA Snare Etude

Snare Drum

(odd year)

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♩ = 110

Musical staff 1: Snare drum notation, measures 1-6. Includes dynamics *mp* and accents.

Musical staff 2: Snare drum notation, measures 7-11. Includes dynamics *ff* and *p*, and rhythmic patterns RRLLR LLRRL.

Musical staff 3: Snare drum notation, measures 12-16. Includes rhythmic patterns RLRL LRLR R, RLLR LLRL RLRL LLLR.

Musical staff 4: Snare drum notation, measures 17-23. Includes dynamics *f* and *p*, and a fortissimo section.

Musical staff 5: Snare drum notation, measures 24-28. Includes dynamics *mp* and a fortissimo section.

Musical staff 6: Snare drum notation, measures 29-35. Includes accents.

Musical staff 7: Snare drum notation, measures 36-42. Includes dynamics *pp* and rhythmic patterns RLRL L RLRL RLLRL RLLR LL RRL RLL RLRL RLLRL.

Musical staff 8: Snare drum notation, measures 43-51. Includes dynamics *mp* and accents.

Musical staff 9: Snare drum notation, measures 52-56. Includes dynamics *ppp* and *f*.

# District 9 Jr. High IMEA Marimba Etude

(odd year)

Marimba or Vibes  
or Xylophone

$\text{♩} = 60$

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