

Eights Dynamics

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R...

L... R

Purpose:

This exercise focuses on the basic velocity stroke while changing heights. The idea is to use the same exact technique and stick velocity, regardless of the stroke height.

1) Stick motion:

All strokes in this exercise should be very legato. In the cresc and decresc measures, make sure that the stick height changes gradually over the entire measure. A very common tendency is to decrescendo too quickly. It takes some control to gradually decrease the stick height.

2) Sound Quality:

Make sure that the quality of sound is consistent regardless of stick height. A very common tendency is to pound the last note of the crescendos. Don't do it! Also, make sure the last few notes at the end of the decrescendos are still solid taps. Don't let the sound die out - keep putting velocity into the stick.

3) Rhythm and Timing:

How perfect is your eighth note rhythm? Some common areas where mistakes occur:

- a) First two notes of the exercise: The first note defines the exercise starting point and the second note defines the tempo. You must internalize the tempo before you start so that these two notes are 'perfect'.
- b) Hand-to-hand transfers: It is very common for people to warp the rhythm when switching hands. The key here is to think of the exercise as a steady stream of eighth notes while ignoring the fact that you are switching hands.
- c) Changing tempo with the dynamics. Make sure your tempo is completely independent of the dynamics - METRONOME!

4) Variations to this exercise:

- a) Double the length of each measure.
- b) Halve the length of each measure.
- c) Play exercise with different variation in heights.
- d) Play exercise as all double stops, checking that the stick motion from left to right is the same.