

Percussive ARTiculation

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A story...

“Being an ‘ist’ is special. If you’re an ‘ist’ you’re a pianist or a violist, and like all ‘ists’ your force of definition comes from something central, something commonly held. In the case of musical instruments, it comes from the object itself that’s played.”

– Steven Schick

What are we aspiring to be?

A Drummer?

A Percussionist?

A Musician?

Why do this clinic?

My students

My educational experience

Working with future Music Educators

What is articulation?

Articulation:

“Directions to a performer typically through symbols and icons on a musical score that indicate characteristics of the attack, duration, and decay of a given note.”

What Percussionists See



Louder



Really Loud or Rimshot (or both)



Half Accent?



Dead stroke? Typo? Smudge from lunch?



Uhh...



C, D, E, C... Right?

Common Articulation Markings



Accent

A stress or special emphasis of a beat to mark its position in a measure



Marcato

A strongly accented note, usually with slight separation



Tenuto

Perform this note/chord for its full rhythmic value (or longer)



Staccato

Detached, separated, and distinct



Staccatissimo

Detached and short, even more extreme than staccato



Slur

All notes are smoothly connected and grouped together as a unit/phrase

Now what?

How do percussionists change their sound?

Try a different mallet?

Wrong.

Well... maybe not, but we'll come back to that.

“Percussion is not a mechanical art form, in fact it’s a very malleable art form. In fact, the least important thing we do is to hit things. The most important thing we do is to raise the stick. That’s where the art is... The art is in raising it, and poising it just so that a certain kind of lowering is instantiated.”

- Steven Schick

“You sound how you look.”

The “6 M’s”

“Make a Musical Motion that Matches the Musical Moment.”

Variables

Sticking Choices

Stroke

- Speed
- Height
- Follow-through

Grip Pressure

Implement Selection

Sticking Considerations

Common sticking systems

- Straight
- Pure Alternating

Other options

- Doubles, Triples, combinations

Functional vs. artistic stickings

- Focus on what's above the staff not underneath
- Stickings are like string bowings, alternate fingerings for wind players, and pianists fingerings

Peters – *Advanced Snare Drum Studies*

“Etude No. 2”



Stroke

The good and bad of “piston” stroke.

Speed

- Faster = brighter, more articulation

Height

- Protect your sound
- Protect your instrument

Follow-through

- Stay connected to the notes like a pianist

Grip

More pressure = more articulation

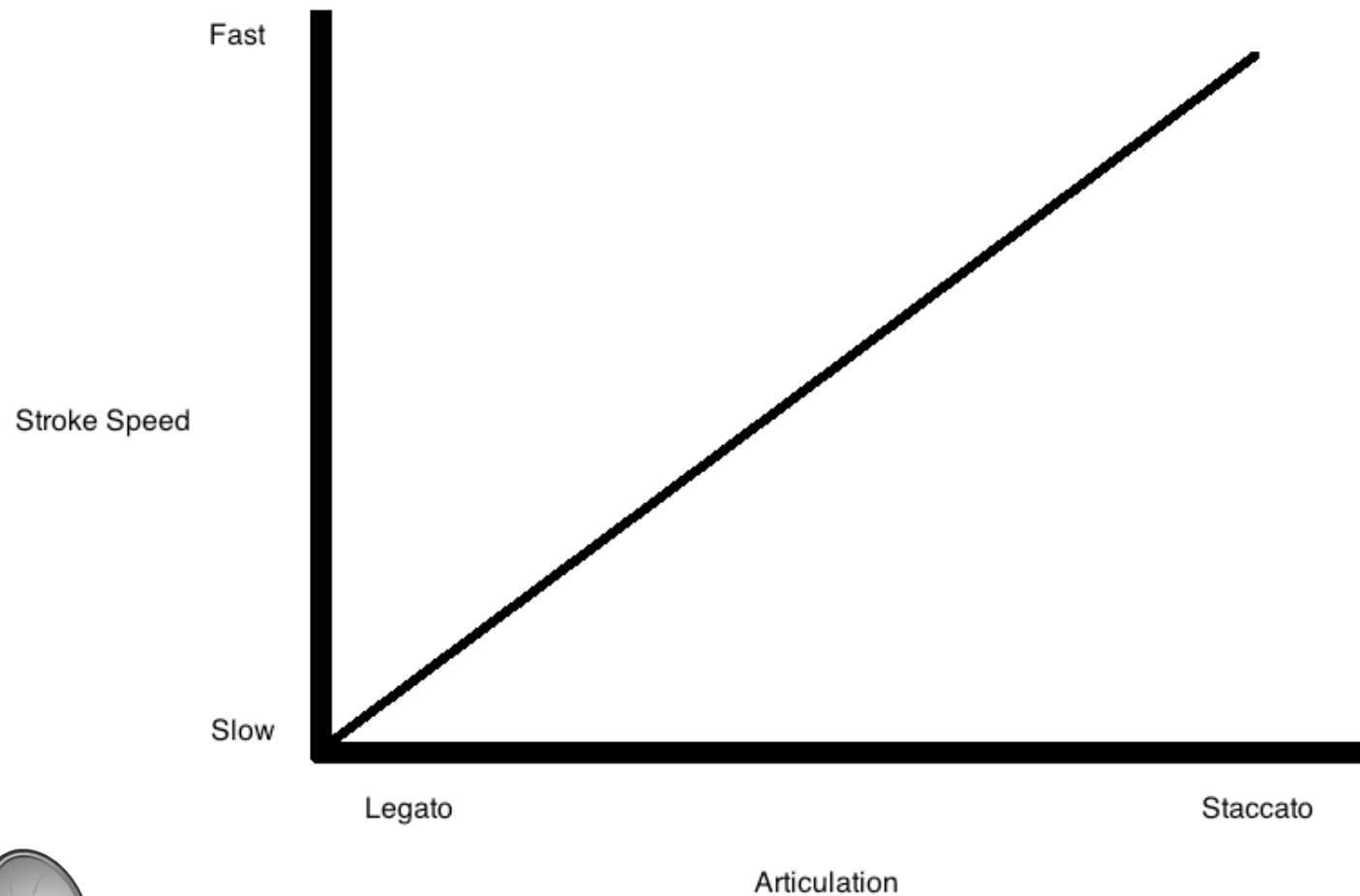
Less pressure = less articulation

Dial it up or down, but you have to be in control.

Table of Common Stroke Types

	Speed	Physical Characteristics	Follow-through	Grip Pressure
Accent	Moderate	Wrist Turn	Moderate	Moderate
Legato/Slur	Slow	Relaxed through arm and wrist	Slow, but consistent movement	Loose
Staccato	Very fast	Wrist, jabbing motion, upstroke	Very fast (piston stroke)	Very Firm
Tenuto	Slow	More weight than normal stroke, but minimize attack	Mallet stays down for duration of note	Firm, with subtle squeeze on impact
Marcato	Moderate/Slow	Heavy, weighted stroke, primarily with forearm	Mallet stays down	Firm, but relaxing on contact

Articulation and Stroke Speed



Ford - *Manhattan*

$\text{♩} = 80-88$ The Dancer

1 2 3 3

mf *mp* *p*

7

mf *mp* *p*



Manhattan 2

27

3 3 4

f *mf*

This system contains measures 27 through 31. Measure 27 begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. A slur covers measures 27 and 28. A red vertical bar is positioned between measures 28 and 29. Measures 29 and 30 are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 31 is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Fingerings 3 and 4 are indicated above the treble staff in measures 29 and 30 respectively. The bass staff features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

32

3 4 2 3 2 4 2 4 2 3 2 4 2 3

f *mf*

1 2

This system contains measures 32 through 36. Measures 32 and 33 are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measures 34 and 35 are marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 36 ends with a whole rest. Fingerings 3, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 3 are indicated above the treble staff in measures 34 through 36. The bass staff continues with eighth-note accompaniment in measures 32-35, then rests in measure 36.



Manhattan 3

42

2 4 2 3

ff

46

1

1

1

1

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Manhattan 3". The score is written for piano, featuring a treble and bass staff. The first system covers measures 42 to 45, and the second system covers measures 46 to 49. A vertical red line is placed between measure 45 and 46. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The second system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first system includes a forte (ff) dynamic marking and a fingering of 2 4 2 3. The second system includes a fingering of 1. The score is presented in a clear, legible format with a white background and black notation.



Implements

The golden rule.

- Mass = Volume
- Hardness = Articulation

Choose mallets that work WITH you.

Some instruments are more affected by implement selection than others.

So what?

(How do I bring this into my curriculum?)

Talk the talk.

- Just like the English teacher working on vocabulary.

Incorporate articulation into exercises, warm-ups, and assigned etudes.

- You already vary tempo, and possibly dynamics. Why not articulation?

Experiment WITH your students.

- If you have an idea, try it.

Be on the lookout for sounds you like.

- Don't be afraid to ask.

Know what's in your students' mallet bags.

- You don't have to know every mallet in the world. Just theirs.

