

The Percussive Arts Society International Convention
The Indianapolis Convention Center
Room 205
November 12th, 2021 from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Accessories Before the Act: How to Prevent Criminal Sounds Within Your Percussion Section
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Assistant Professor of Percussion

I. Tambourine: Live Performance, Grip, Body Positioning, and Stroke Types



- a. Live Performance Demonstration:
 - *Nutcracker Suite*, “II. Danses Caractéristiques, C. Trepak”: 6 after rehearsal “C” to the end

- b. Grip/Body Positioning
 - Grab tambourine by your non-dominant hand.
 - The hole is not for your fingers. It is for mounting the tambourine to a cymbal stand. Do not break your finger.



- Place tambourine in the crease of your hand where your fingers meet your palm and place your thumb in the center of the head, splitting the head into two hemispheres.
 - This position might change depending on your hand size.



- Muffle the tambourine with your middle finger.
 - The use of gaff tape, duct tape, or moleskin is okay as well, especially on plastic heads.



- Hold away from your body (4-8 inches), about chest level, at a 45-to-65-degree angle.
 - This allows quick access to rolls (shake, finger, or special sauce), executing rhythmic passages, and changes in dynamics.



c. Stroke Type: Overview

- Changing implements (fingers and fist)
 - Put your four fingers together in your dominant hand and support them with the thumb underneath.



- We will move our implements (fingers) from the center or off-center to the rim, preferably over a jingle.



○ The Strokes:

1. *The Sock Puppet*

- Used around the center or off-center, for general playing.
- Used for forte to piano dynamics.



2. *Tea Time*

- Pinky out.
- Used for mezzo forte to pianissimo dynamics.



3. *Super Fancy*

- Pinky and ring out.
- Used for mezzo piano to pianissimo dynamics.



4. *Sweet Tea*

- Pinky, ring, and middle out.
- Used for piano to pianissimo dynamics.



5. *Heel of Hand*

- Heel on head, no thumb under index, fingers off the side of tambourine, index making the stroke.
- Stroke is forceful, e.g. like snapping a rubber band.



6. *The Waiter*

- Hold the underside of the tambourine head with non-dominant hand, like a waiter holds a tray, then play using a combination of strokes 1-5.



7. *The Door Knock*

- Create a fist with dominant hand, but the thumb is off to the side.
- Knock your knuckles against the center of the head.
- Used for forte to fortissimo dynamics or for accents.



8. *Lights Out*



- Create the fist from *The Door Knock*.
- Both the knuckles and the heel of the hand will strike the center of the head at the same time.
- The air trapped inside the canal you created will escape quickly, creating a “pop.”
- Used for the loudest dynamics possible or strong accent/staccato markings.



d. Rolls: *Special Sauce*

○ Overview

- Coined by Neil Grover.
- You are always in contact with the instrument.
- I teach this to all my students first and then we work on the isolated, one-handed shake roll.

○ Technique

- Hold tambourine with non-dominant hand.
- On the head of the tambourine, place index, middle, and ring fingers at a 90-degree angle from your non-dominant hand's thumb.



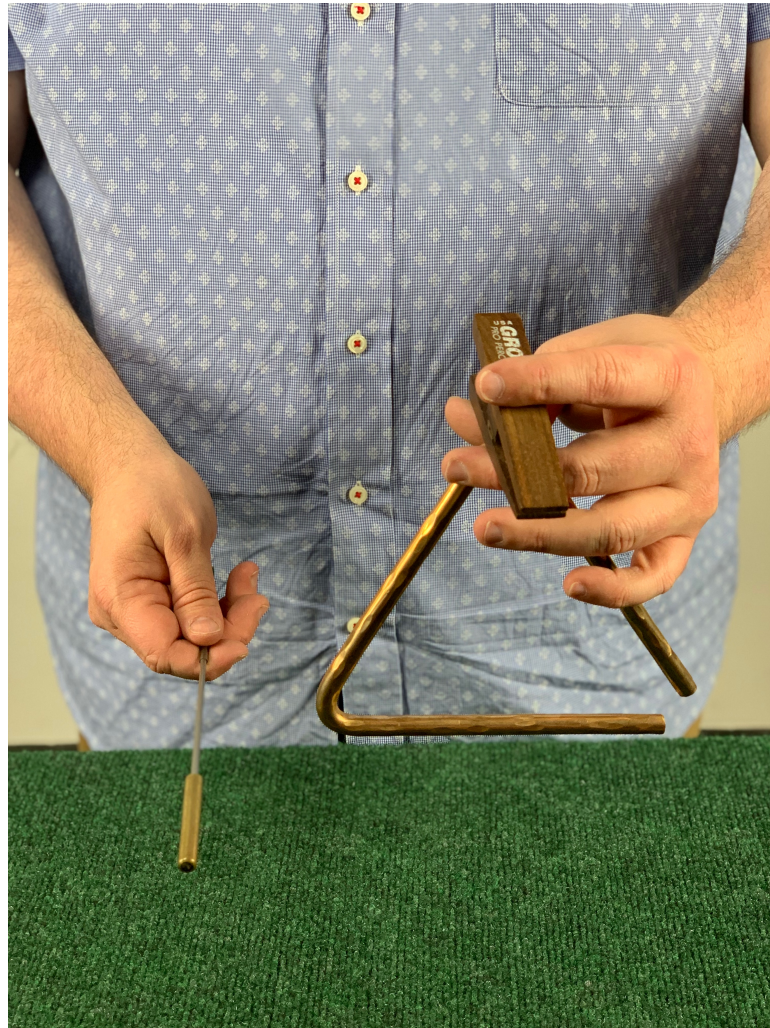


- **It's pretend time!!** Imagine holding a live fish. (It wiggles.)
- Now force that fish (your fingers) against the head at the 90-degree angle spot.
- Allow the fingers and some of your wrist to wiggle back and forth, but always remain in contact with the head.
- The faster you wiggle, the more the tambourine vibrates.
- Increase or decrease the speed to change dynamics.

II. Triangle: Grip, Muting, and Rolls



- a. Grip: Holding the Clip
 - Use your non-dominant hand to hold the clip and your dominant hand for the beater.



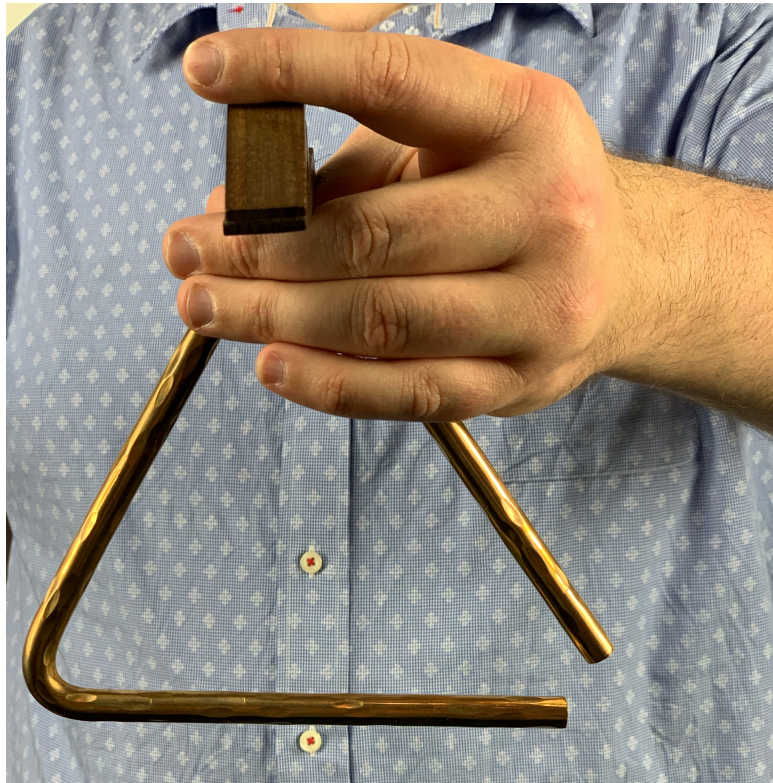
- Put the pinky, ring, and middle fingers of your non-dominant hand together.
- Separate the index finger and thumb.



- With the string facing the ground, put the nose of the clip between the index and the three conjoined fingers, resting the butt of the clip on the thumb.



- Insert the triangle so that the open end is facing to your left, if you are right handed.



- Sound radiates everywhere from this instrument so it's important that the triangle is in sight of the conductor and audience.

Pro-tip:

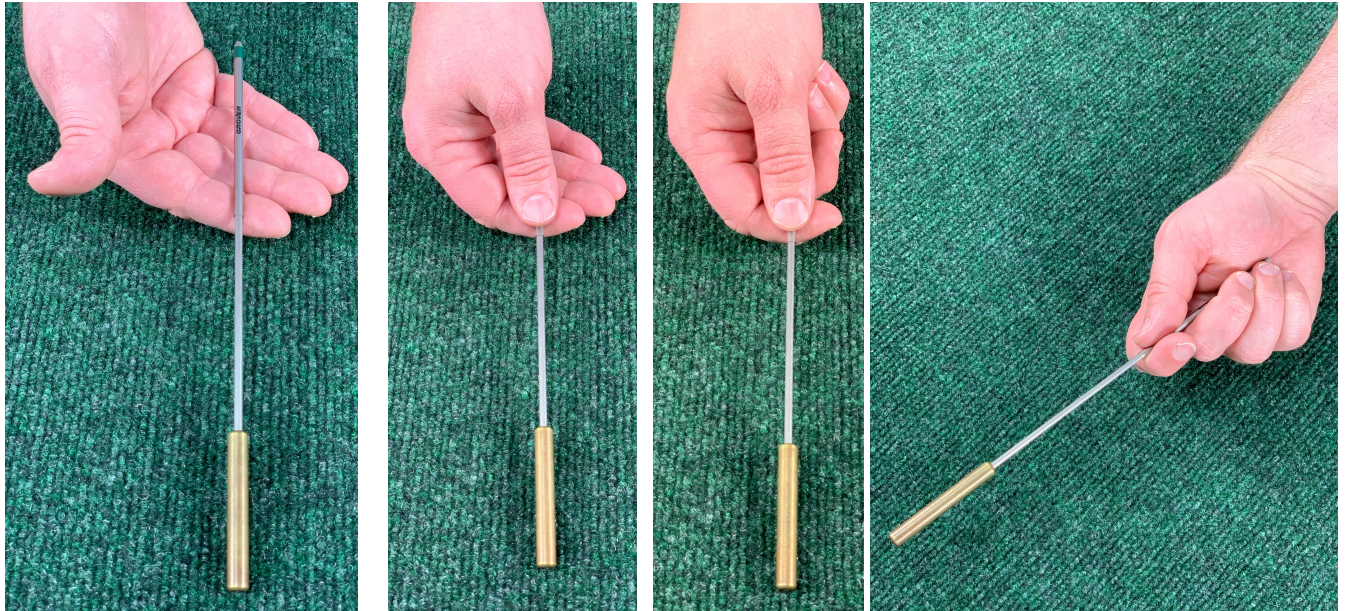
***Sometimes I look through the triangle to the music and/or the conductor.
Also, you can look under the triangle to the music and up to the conductor.***



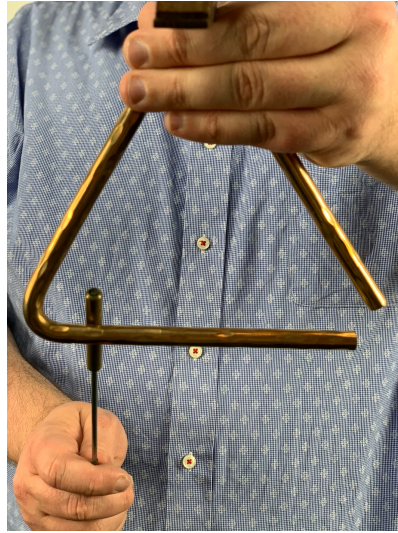
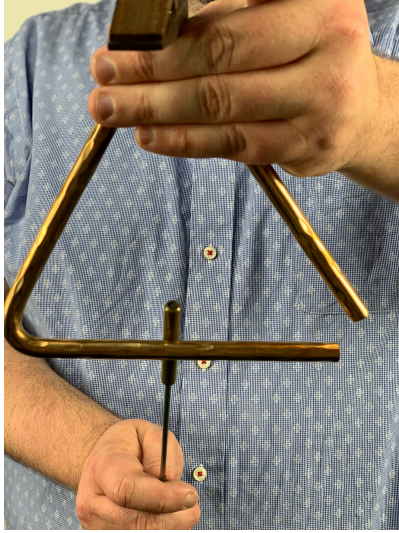


b. Grip: Holding the Beater

- Holding the beater is similar to holding a snare drum stick.
 - Creating a fulcrum: lay the shaft along the first joint of the index finger, place the finger print of your thumb on top of the shaft, and let the other fingers wrap around the shaft.
 - Anchor the butt of the beater into your palm for stability.



- **Only use wrists.**
- Similar to playing a ride cymbal or simple strokes on a snare drum.
- There is no set place to strike a triangle: **you can hit it anywhere.**
- General performance practice is to strike the triangle on the bottom arm or on the outside of the right arm.



Pro-tip:

***I always use a larger beater on triangle, even if it's a soft passage.
To excite the triangle quickly, a lot of surface area and weight is needed.
We still want a full sound, even if it's soft.***



c. Muting/Muffling

- I use three fingers:
 - The pinky, ring, and middle will serve as the muting/muffling fingers.
 - Three layers of muffling, muting, and tapering.
- This allows you to stop specific overtones one at a time.
 - Moving and/or adding from pinky to ring to middle.
- Faster muting with all fingers at once.
 - Lean the triangle forward to stop ALL sound quickly.





d. Long Rolls: Practice Method

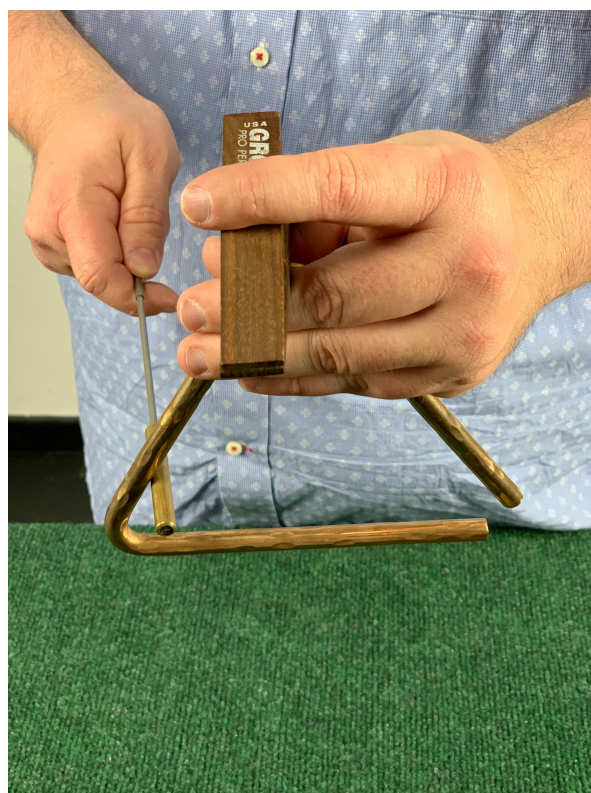
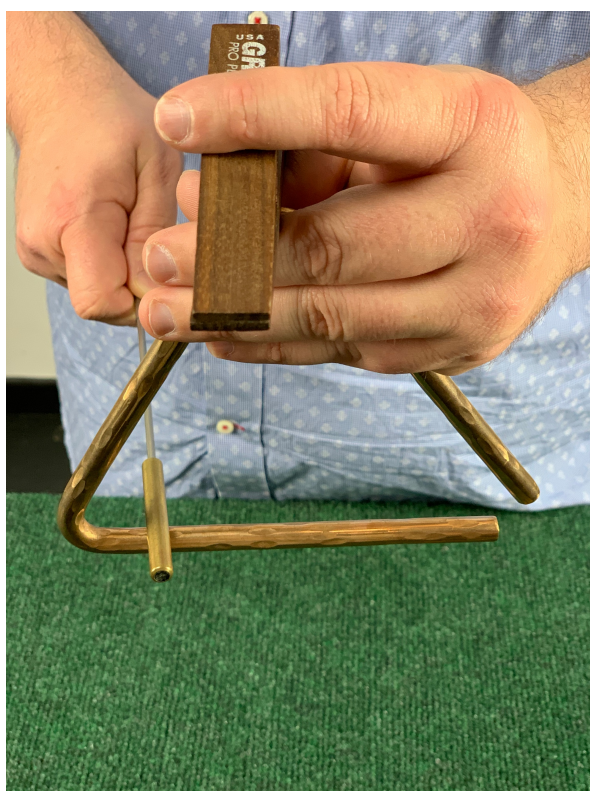
- Hold the triangle in playing position, but completely muffled/muted.
- Put your beater in the right side, in between the bottom and right arms, so that when you strike one side, the opposite side of the beater strikes in the same position.

IMPORTANT:

Pick a side to strike first—either up or down. (Experiment.)

Example:

Without prepping the beater, go down and then up again in a strict motion.



○ Developing Your Long Roll Exercise

- Set metronome to 65 bpm with a quarter note subdivision.
- Make sure the triangle is muted.
- Insert beater in the bottom right angle, adjacent to the open side.
- Make sure you are hitting the top and bottom arms of the triangle in the same spot on both sides of the beater.
- Repeat the exercise, but when you get to the 32nd notes, unmute the triangle and let it ring.

Triangle Long Roll Exercise

Tommy Dobbs

$\text{♩} = 65$

$\frac{4}{4}$

3

5

7

9

11

e. Metered Rolls: Practice Method

- Take the 32nd note section from the end of the long roll exercise and play it with the desired note lengths below.
 - Metronome on 65 bpm with 16th note subdivisions

Triangle Metered Roll Exercises

Tommy Dobbs

Quarter Note



Two Quarter Notes



Three Quarter Notes



Four Quarter Notes



III. Crash Cymbals: Grip, Crashes, and Muting



a. The Grip: General Overview

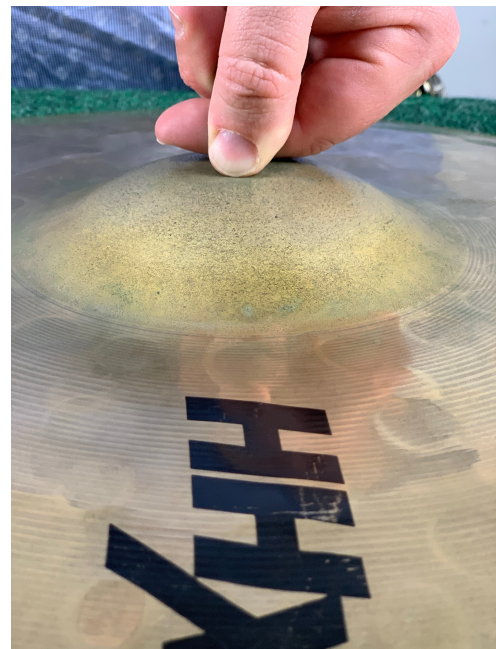
- It is important to remember that there are many ways and justifications on how to hold and crash cymbals. This is *a* way but certainly not *the* way.
- Put your four fingers together, similar to creating the sock puppets for tambourine, with your palm facing the sky.



- Lay the cymbal strap along the first two joints of the four fingers.



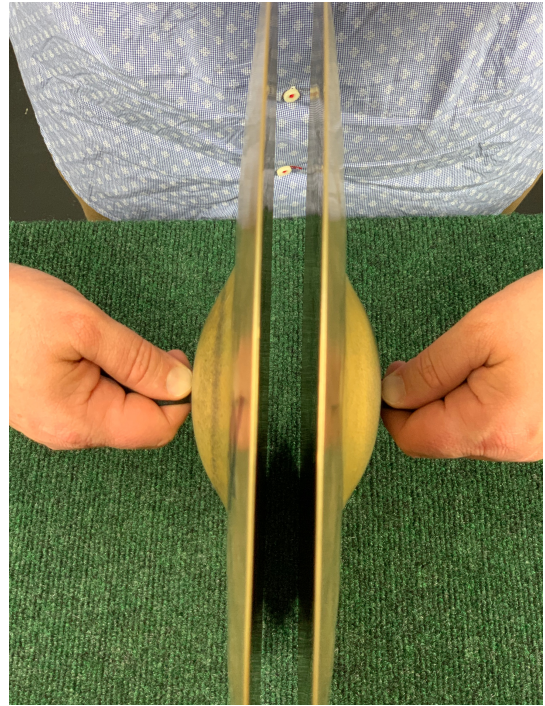
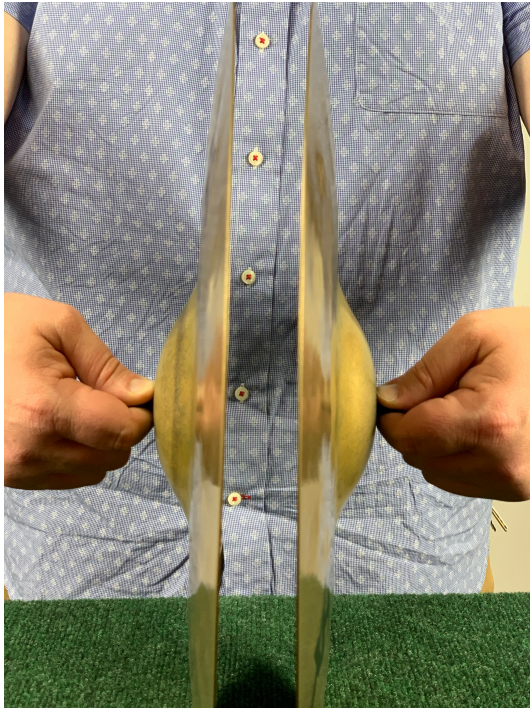
- Place your thumb print over the strap so it is above the first or second joint of your index finger, creating a fulcrum— similar to the snare drum grip.
- Gently close the other three fingers around the strap.
- The tip of your thumb will go into the dome of the cymbal.
- Match this with the opposite hand.





b. Soft Crashes

- Create the grip discussed above in both hands.
- Pick up cymbals so that they are perpendicular to the floor.



- Make the distance between the two cymbals around 2-4 inches.
- Your left hand (or non-dominant hand) will remain stationary.
- Your right hand will be moving toward the left in a slow manner.

Pro-Tip:

***Close one eye and look between the two cymbals to the floor.
This will allow you to see all aspects of the two plates as they are coming together.***

- The cymbals must be completely parallel to each other and perpendicular to the floor.
- Now slowly move the right hand to the left while looking between the two plates with one eye closed.
 - The longer you touch the cymbals together, the more sizzle sound.
 - The more quickly you hit them together and remove them, more of a light “cha” will sound.

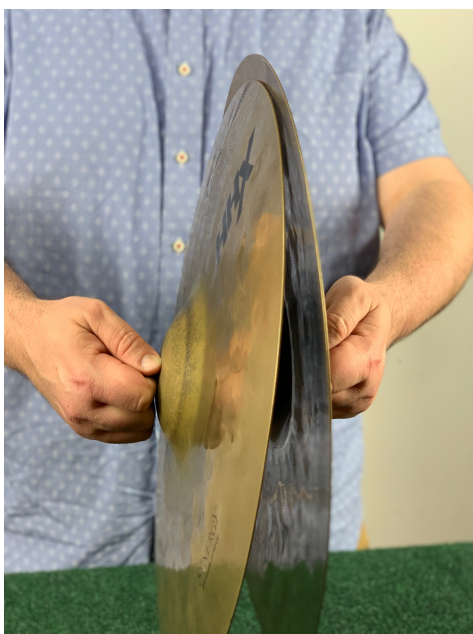


c. Repeater Crashes (March Crashes)

- Create the grip discussed above in both hands.
- Pick up the cymbals so that they are perpendicular to the floor.
- Put the cymbals together and pull the top of the right cymbal (dominant hand) about 1-3 inches down on the inside of the left (non-dominant).



- Then create around a 15- to 30-degree angle with the right cymbal (dominant hand).



- This angle is going to help create a small flam when the two cymbals meet and that is what creates the “crash” sound.
- While holding this angle and the 1- to 3-inch slope, make the distance between the two cymbals about 3-8 inches depending on the volume you need.
 - The greater distance between the two plates, the louder the crash.
 - The larger the angle between the two plates, the louder the crash.
- Now imagine you are one of those monkey alarm clocks, but your left hand is slightly broken. It will be stationary.



- Holding the angle you created, slam the right hand into the left. Crashing cymbals is a violent act.

Pro-tip:

I slightly relax my grip when the cymbals collide. I believe this allows the cymbals to vibrate more, which means more sound.



d. Cadential Crashes

- Create the grip discussed above in both hands.
- Pick up the cymbals so that they are perpendicular to the floor.
- Put the cymbals together and pull the top of the right cymbal (dominant hand) about 2-5 inches down on the inside of the left (non-dominant).



- Then create around a 25- to 50-degree angle with the right cymbal (dominant hand).
 - Sharper angles = the greater the flam = the louder the crash.
- Holding this angle, with your hands relaxed and not squeezing as much as you would for the soft crashes, slam the plates together.
- You can also hold the cymbals parallel to the floor and create around a 15- to 30-degree angle with the right cymbal (dominant hand).



e. Muting/Muffling

- It helps to mute if you have a nice big belly, so start eating because the future of your cymbal crashes depends on it.
- Getting yourself back into a normal playing position after muting is very important. That is why I mute the way I do.
- After crashing, with the cymbals perpendicular to the floor, bring them into your stomach area lightly, but with enough force to stop MOST of the sound.



- Then quickly return the cymbals to the original playing position for your next crash.
- This can be practiced without cymbals using just your hands.



Supplemental Information



Please scan the code above or visit my website at www.tommydobbsp percussion.com for additional information on accessory percussion instruments, including purchasing, maintenance, practice exercises, and articles/video demonstrations.



Scan the code above to access all the video demonstrations discussed during the clinic and throughout this packet



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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my sponsors for providing me with world-class instruments and mallets. These companies work tirelessly to make sure we always have what we need to sound our best and I cannot thank them enough.

A special thank you to my family, Charlene and Gene Engle, and my fiancée, Jessica Holt, for being so supportive and always pushing me to new heights. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you to my colleagues at Oklahoma City University for the encouragement and constant support. I have the honor of working alongside some of the finest educators and performers in the world. I am proud to call you my friends.

Finally, a huge thank you to my students. I am truly humbled to have the quality of student that I do at OCU. We are creating a family environment that stands firm behind a single motto: *Great People First. Great Players Second.* These young musicians are some of the most outstanding people I have ever met and it just so happens that they are wonderful performers and educators as well. I am lucky to be where I am and I look forward to the many insightful lessons to come.

Thank you for listening today. I wish you and your students all the best as you dive into the world of accessory percussion instruments. If I can ever be of assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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The logo for Beetle Percussion features a stylized beetle head icon to the left of the word "beetle" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Below "beetle" is the word "PERCUSSION" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font.

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The Pearl logo consists of the word "Pearl" in a white, cursive script font, set against a solid black rectangular background.

SABIAN
The Sabian logo features the word "SABIAN" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. Below the text is a graphic of several concentric, semi-circular lines that resemble a stylized drum head or a sound wave.

The Adams logo features the word "ADAMS" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font, enclosed within a thick, black, rounded rectangular border.