

Periscope Lesson 4

Left Hand Traditional

I became obsessed with traditional in middle school when I first saw the high school drumline. Despite my pleas, my private lesson teacher held off on teaching me this left hand technique, insisting that I focus on playing matched. We spent our lessons paying attention to sound, stroke, and technique on instruments like snare drum, marimba, and timpani.

A little frustrating at the time, but it was definitely for the better. I developed an expectation for a balanced and even sound in both hands. The immediate A-B comparison is so important for a beginning player. This was a good lesson in trusting my teacher, and knowing that they had my best interest in mind. Finally, it came time to learn traditional, and over the years, my hands had gone through several iterations as I learned and grew as a player.

In today's lesson, we talk about the power and importance of being able to **imitate**. We'll walk through how I set up my students with LH Traditional for the first time, as well as advanced concepts for the seasoned player, including finger control, contact without pressure, and general "maintenance".

I've avoided using the term "grip" after teaching with Chris Lamb (New York Philharmonic, Principal Percussionist) for the past two summers, and listening to his thoughts on how the term "grip" implies tension and restriction of the stick. Instead, he prefers the term "embouchure", which I like. I think it's an idea that can be related to our wind and brass colleagues, and similar to how they set up their lips and faces, it can be related to how we set up our fingers and hands.

Below is my "IKEA" step-by-step handout for how to set up your left hand - no text, just look at the pictures and imitate!

LESSON OUTLINE

Part I

Imitation: Observe, Compare, Critically Assess

Part 2

Rotation Mechanics

Finger Placement

Mirror Stroke

Part 3

Teacher Tip

Bead Placement

Sound Quality

Slicing

Finger Control

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