

SELECTION

Cymbals are instruments of great coloristic expression. While they can add a brilliance of sound unlike any other instrument, they must be played with care and musicality. It is imperative that cymbals be chosen for sound and manageability. For younger students, a pair of 17" medium-light cymbals is recommended. For high school players, addition of medium 19" cymbals is appropriate. For maximum resonance only soft leather straps should be used! The addition of leather pads can also aid in cymbal handling. Wooden handles or soft "furry" pads are not acceptable in the concert hall!

GRIP

Cymbals should be held in a relaxed, yet controllable manner. The wrists should never be inserted through the strap, rather, the strap should be held between the thumb and pointer finger, with the other fingers supporting the pointer. Imagine turning a key in a car door, ending with the thumb on top. This is exactly the way the cymbal strap is held.

STROKE

Hold both cymbals together with the top edge at eye level. Slowly separate the cymbals, keeping them closer for soft crashes and farther apart for loud crashes. Using a flam motion bring the cymbals together and instantly pull them apart. Very soft crashes are played by lightly "scraping" the cymbals together. Many students have trouble playing soft crashes and resort to touching the edges at a perpendicular angle. This is not acceptable!

MUFFLING

Cymbals commonly have to be muffled, especially for short accent notes. This is accomplished by bringing the cymbals into the chest area after striking together.