



photo by Kirby Fong



is important, as it provides more reason to play from memory when possible, allowing full focus on the sound quality.

The first exercise that I use with my students when addressing sound quality



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ty is something I call the Four-Bar Blues. It is a simple exercise in concept – four measures of 16th notes with absolutely no change in sound – but students are often surprised at the difficulty. Once the student gets past the initial surprise of how difficult this is, the point then becomes one of correction during performance and how to make these adjustments quickly.

The additional exercises on the previous page are just a starting point for many percussionists but can be used with experienced players for practice in paying attention to sound quality and timing. The same concepts can be applied to triplets for additional variety. As students practice, the focus should always be on sound quality, using the aspects of sound and time to make decisions on what needs to be corrected. After playing I have students answer questions: What grade would you give yourself? What was worse (or better), sound or time? What can you do to improve?

Using the parameters of sound and time, percussionists can start to hone in on their quality of sound. Once a solid level of awareness is reached, student improvement should improve dramatically. □



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