

Pariah Marching Percussion Theatre Cymbal Technique



Vertical Position: Hold the cymbals parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground straight out in front of you. Your thumbs should be at eye level and your elbows should be bent outward. You may have to push the cymbals away from your body to accomplish this.

Horizontal Position: Hold the cymbals parallel to each other and at a 35-degree angle to the ground with the right cymbal on top. They should be 1.5" apart. Your thumbs should be sternum-level and 2 inches to the left of the center of your body.

Playing Techniques:

Crash: Approach the crash with a slight grace-note flam to keep the cymbals from catching air and to get the full tone of the cymbal. It will come in and a slight angle, but flatten out as soon as it makes contact. There will be two contacts with the cymbals, but not far enough apart to hear both. Be sure not to grasp the cymbals with your fingers because it will deaden the sound. Vertical crashes use an "A-V" prep, as well as at horizontal prepping the right hand back into the bicep and following through past the stationary left cymbal.

Sizzle: Sizzles can be done at horizontal or vertical position. Prep by pulling the cymbals apart an inch or two. Allow the cymbals to make contact with each other and let remove your fingers from the cymbal. This will result in a sizzling sound. Approach this technique with some finesse or it will cut off the sound.

Slam: Slams can be done at horizontal or vertical position. Prep by pulling the cymbals apart an inch or two. Using your entire right arm, push the right cymbal into the left so they are flush. Squeeze tightly right after impact so there is no noise after the note. This will give you a quick, deep sound.

Hat: A hat is played by hinging the cymbals on your stomach. Open the front of the cymbals a few inches and then push them closed. This will give you a hi-hat sound.

Slide-Suck: Start by playing a sizzle but push the cymbal away from you during the sizzle. Now push the cymbals together and pull the right back in to the left until they are flush. You will catch some air and get a thunk sound after the sizzle.

Taps: Taps can be performed at many different positions. The main tap position is vertical with a slight difference: move the bottoms of the cymbals away from each other until they form an A with a 45-degree angle between them. To get a tap, prep the right cymbal by moving the top of the cymbal to the right until it is straight up and down. Let the top of the right cymbal hit the top of the left and move back to the starting position. You should get some ring out of this 'ting' sound.

Crash Chokes: Cut the sound off after the initial attack by dampening the cymbals on your forearms, right above the armpits, or slightly below your chest (body).

Belly Taps: Put your hands in between your belly button and chest. Looking down at the cymbals, they should form a "A" pointing away from your body. Perform a tap as described above, but let the cymbals to stay in contact with your body. This should give you a dull thud sound.