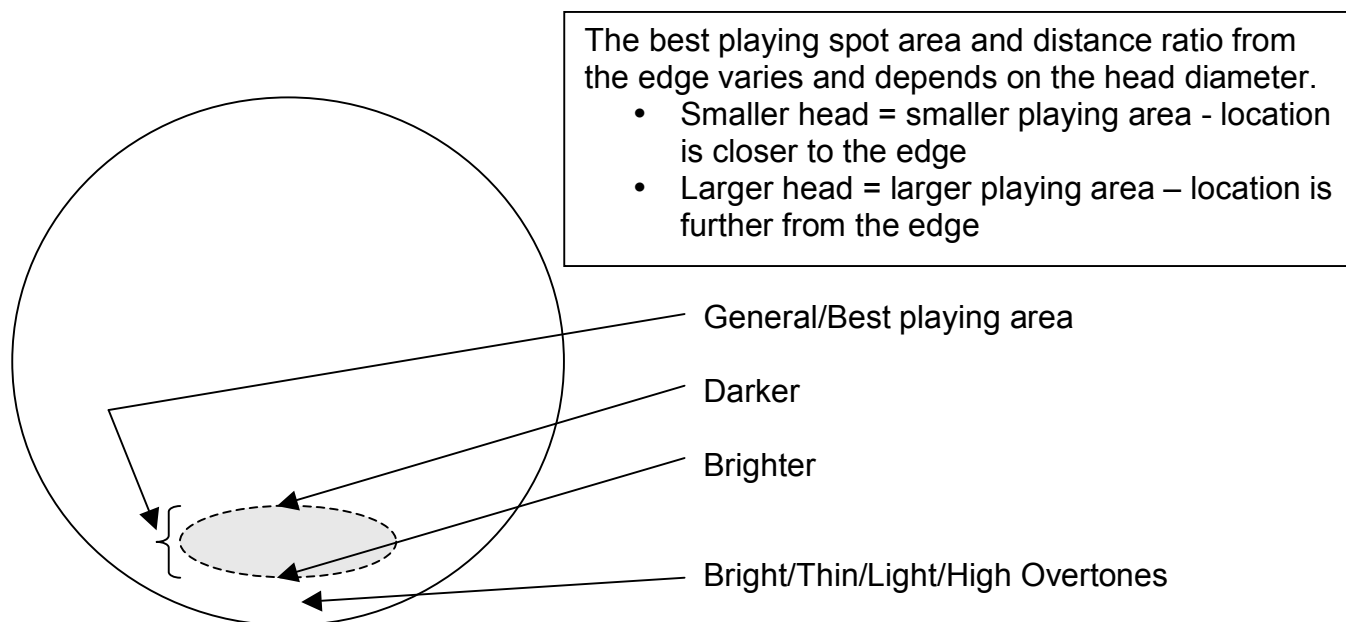


Timpani Techniques

By Steve Hearn

What Affects Tone, Color, and Articulation?

1. Choice of mallets, instrument, and heads (synthetic or calf)
2. **VAP**
 1. **Velocity of mallet**----- (Kinetic Energy)
 - a. Velocity changes sound more than mass: $1/2MV^2 = \text{Energy}$
(Energy changes sound)
 2. **Angle of mallet**----- not the rebound after the stroke
 - a. **Focused** = core of mallet (elbow down)
 - b. **Unfocused/Veiled** = top of mallet (elbow up)
 3. **Placement of contact on head** (depends on head size)
 - a. **Center** = Dark/Dry/No Overtones
 - b. **Between Edge & Center** = Dark/Heavy/Articulate
 - c. **General Playing Area** = Full/Rich/Balanced Overtones
 - d. **Near Edge** = Bright/Very Thin/Light/High Overtones



Strokes

- Wrist stroke (fingers snug on mallet shaft) = fuller/darker timbre - FOCUSED
- Wrist/Finger stroke (fingers loose on mallet shaft and helping to move mallet) = thinner/lighter timbre – UNFOCUSED
- Stroke = DOWN-UP (NOT up-down)
- LIFT the mallet = the louder the dynamic, the more you lift the mallet off the head

Body Position/Physical Line

Chest and upper body must be behind the arms and stroke to achieve a full and rich timbre. Keep the center of your weight behind your stroke to get the fullest sound possible.

Bowing

A bowing is equivalent to a motive or very short phrase. Like a violinist, a timpanist should learn phrases by grouping several notes into one motion to create a bowing rather than learning in a vertical one-note-at-a-time manner. Learn a piece bowing by bowing (motion by motion) rather than note by note.