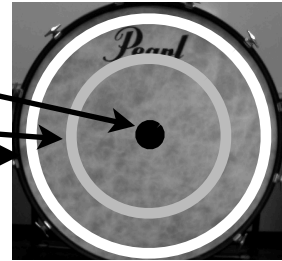


Bass drum defines the low end of the concert band, and is the timpani's indefinitely-pitched counterpart. The highest paid member of Sousa's touring band was the bass drummer. The second highest paid was the principal virtuoso cornet soloist.

**Playing Areas:**

- Center = Most articulate, least tone, special "cannon" effect
- Sweet Spot = Most, darkest tone, default position
- Edge (4") = Bright, light, thin tone, good for soft, airy rolls



**Technique:**

- Relaxed grip, motion straight in and out
- Traditional grip for upright/tilted drums is advisable
- Play in the sweet spot most of the time



**Rolls:**

- Bass Heads vibrate slowly and need room to breathe
  - Roll slowly in the sweet spot with beaters apart
  - DO NOT roll fast or in the same/opposite spots
  - "Pops" mean you are out of sync with the head.
  - Change speed or position to correct.



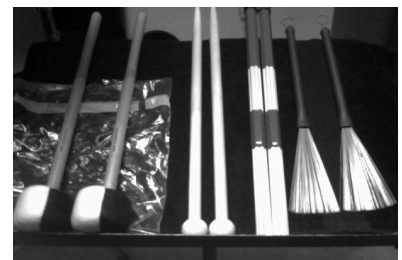
**Dampening:**

- Dampen playing head with the knee.
  - Use a chair or stool if needed.
- Dampen resonant head with the left hand
- Open knee/hand to play, dampen for rests/releases
  - Mimic articulation with any unison part in low brass or low strings
- Play all-closed for a muted, non-ringing tone (thump)



**Implements:**

- Double-headed mallets are versatile and recommended
- Large wood or chamois mallets are good for clear articulation
- Brushes and bundle sticks are common special effects
- Thumb rolls as on tambourine are also common effects



**Tuning:**

- Bass heads should be "cleared" like timpani heads
  - The head should have the same pitch at every lug
  - Mute the opposite head, touch the center with one finger
  - Tap by every lug and tune to unison