

Damping and Dampers

Introduction:

Dampening or muting the strings adds a very nice affect to your hammered dulcimer playing. Dampening the strings mutes much of the natural sustain of the instrument, bringing forward overtones that are usually overshadowed. Muting can be accomplished a number of ways: with your hands; with materials such as felt or masking tape; with a mechanical dampening system; or with a pedal system. Dampening pedals allow the player to mute and un-mute the strings at will. In this workshop we will discuss ways of dampening strings, and then demonstrate the use of the dampening pedal.

Damping With Your Hands

- Place your fingers on the bridge with just enough pressure
- This technique works nicely in tandem with bending notes

Dampening With Masking Tape

- Masking tape is an affordable easy way to dampen strings
- Easy to put on an remove
- More tape equals more dampening
- The downside is it must be put on before and after playing a tune

Making a Case for Purchasing a Dampening Pedal

- Adds a new dimension to an already wonderful instrument
- Adds dynamic range to the instrument
- Many dulcimer makers offer them now at affordable prices
- Dampening pedals are “cool”

Links to Some Dulcimer Makers Who Offer Dampening Pedals

Dusty Strings

<http://www.dustystrings.com/building/pd40.shtml#dampers>

Same Rizzetta

<http://samrizzetta.com/dulcimers/>

James Jones

<http://www.jamesjonesinstruments.com/hammereddulcimer/hddampers.html>

Master Works - Russell Cook

<http://www.woodnstrings.com/Dampers.htm>

Song of the Wood - Jerry Read Smith

<http://www.songofthewood.com/5%20Octave%20with%20Dampers.htm>

Conclusion

In this workshop we discussed some dampening techniques and demonstrated the use of the dampening pedal.

About The Author:

Cliff Cole purchased his first hammered dulcimer in 1985, from Sam Rizzetta. At the time he was playing drums in a blues band. Prior to taking up the dulcimer, he studied drums and percussion for ten years. Cliff has played in numerous rock, blues, jazz, zydeco and folk ensembles since the age of fifteen. Folk instruments are where the heart is...

Cliff plays the hammered dulcimer in the folk group "DayBreak," which has been together since 1989. They have made several recordings, including "Lost Cave" which was recorded live inside of Lost River Caverns in Hellertown, "Little Steps", and "Autumn Calling," which features many of Cliff's original tunes. They also have produced two Christmas CD's one named "Unity; Unique Music for Christmas" and more recently a Christmas CD of a live Concert recorded in December of 2002

DayBreak's music is available on iTunes and many other digital download stores found on the web.

Cliff also plays gigs with his lovely seventeen old daughter, Emily Rose under the name of Glass Rose's. Emily has a strong, beautiful voice, which blends nicely with the dulcimer and guitar. They released a CD named Falling Wings. The CD feature's Emily's voice and features some of her original tunes.

Cliff's hammered dulcimer was made by James Jones. The full sized 2/16/18/7 instrument covers four octaves and has dampening pedal. For more information about James Jones instruments go to his web site: <http://www.jamesjonesinstruments.com>

Cliff lives with his lovely wife, Pamela, in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. He works as a hardware test engineer for the networking start-up SilverStorm Technologies, which is located in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

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This document can be downloaded from:

<http://www.daybreakfolk.com/CliffCole.htm>