

Dulcimer - Playing Well with Others

Types of group/ensemble playing

1. Classical ensemble
2. Arrangements with a group you play with regularly
3. Jamming or sitting in

Roadblocks?

- fear of embarrassment – get over it – it’s only music!
- nobody to play with? – ask around, go to places other musicians hang out
- get a “practice buddy”
 - record yourself or a friend on piano or guitar to play along with
 - Band-in-a-Box (www.pgmusic.com)

The most important thing when playing with others – **listen!**

- dont just listen to yourself - **listen to the mix** while you’re playing
- back off pounding your dulcimer
 - save the whacking for when you have a solo
 - let the instrument do the work – especially if your mic’ed thru an amplifier/PA system
- what does the tune style/ feel like the way it is being played?
 - bouncy, smooth, swingy, crisp?
- listen to what other people are doing and join them
 - drones
 - vamps
 - stops
 - harmonies

Playing With Others – **Rhythm**

- play on the beat, not after it – be assertive
- keep your own rhythm but be sensitive to changes by others
 - speeding up and slowing down

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- made a mistake? – keep going
- rhythm breaks - keep going

Variety is the spice of life

- melody
- dynamics (softness, loudness)
- drones
- harmony
- chords
 - boom chicks for drive, emphasis
 - play individual chord notes
 - arpeggiated chords
 - arpeggios
- stop playing (rhythm break)
- syncopation
- etc.

Other skills to develop when playing in a group

- multi-task
 - listening while playing (or visa versa)
 - paying attention to signals from other musicians
 - communicating while playing
- think ahead (while playing) to changes coming up
- remember what's next
- solos
 - relax
 - dont tense up
 - don't get too excited and run away with the rhythm
 - keep strong rhythm going