

The techniques we are going to discuss are only a few of the many that can conceivably be used on the dulcimer; however, we hope to describe them in a way that not only will be clear but that will also prompt you to think of your own ways of playing.

## **HAMMERING ON AND PULLING OFF**

If while using the two-finger technique with your left hand, you bring your index finger down sharply and forcefully onto the strings, the action of quickly driving the string down to the fretboard will cause the tone to voice even before the rhythm hand catches that particular note with a strum. Think of your finger as a hammer hitting the string and recoiling as quickly as possible.

For “pulling off,” you “twang” the string with the left hand, that is, after applying the pressure on the string to make the note, you then pull your finger off the string and toward you.

You can practice both these techniques by playing melodies with the left hand alone. The only vibration the strings will receive is hammering and pulling off.

A “riff” we practice is the phrase before the canons fire in Tchaikovsky’s “1812 Overture.” This nine-note phrase can be played completely by hammering on and pulling off with the fingers of the left hand.

## **TRIPLETS**

When you play a triplet series, you are squeezing three notes into one beat. To play triplets, you can use the ring finger as a base. First hammer onto the fretboard with the ring finger, and then follow it in quick succession onto the next frets with the middle finger and then the forefinger. Reversing the process, have all of these fingers on the fretboard, each covering an individual note. Starting with the forefinger, pull each of them off in rapid succession.

This can take a little practice.