

Bandworld

Online Magazine ♦ Volume 24, Number 2



BW 2008*The Future of the Bandworld***MusiClips**

by Ira Novoselsky

[Previous MusiClips](#)
[Next MusiClips](#)
**Children's Dance from "Merry Mount Suite"**

by Howard Hanson

Album Title: American Tapestry
 Recording: Lone Star Wind Orchestra
 Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor
 Publisher: Naxos 8.570968

There was a lot of pre-release buzz about the Lone Star Wind Orchestra and this recording; American Tapestry definitely lives up to the "hype"! Right from the John Williams setting of the Star Spangled Banner, you can tell this is a superlative recording. The program features the Suite from Merry Mount (Hanson/Garland & Boyd), Rhapsody in Blue (Gershwin/Grofe & Hunsberger) and Edward Higgins' newly edited set for Suite of Old American Dances (Robert Russell Bennett). Special mention must be given to American Overture for Band by Joseph Willcox Jenkins; this is the 2003 critical edition supervised by the composer... horns, pay attention to the CORRECT articulation of the first measure! Rounding out American Tapestry is music of Tucker, Bryant & Sousa. Here's to the debut of the Lone Star Wind Orchestra and to future recordings from them..

**Angelus Ad Virginem**

Anonymous

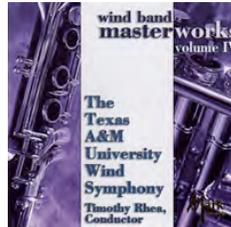
Album Title: Percy Grainger: Transcriptions for Wind Orchestra
 Recording: Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra
 Clark Rundell, conductor
 Publisher: Chandos-Chan 10455

There are plenty of people arranging and editing Percy Grainger's music but here's Grainger transcribing the music of other composers. Some people may be familiar with at least two of these pieces; Tuscan Serenade (Faure) and O Mensch Bewein Dein' Sunde Gross (J.S. Bach). This recording features transcriptions dating from an anonymous 13th Century Carol (Angelus Ad Virginem) to the 20th Century Down Longford Way (Katharine Parker). Included on this recording is a sparkling performance of the Franz Liszt Hungarian Fantasy with pianist Ivan Hovorun. Grainger's setting is so sensitive & masterful one won't even notice the absence of the string section. The scoring techniques of Percy Grainger make for some fascinating research but for listening, this stellar recording deserves a spot in your library.

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**Parade from "Pacific Celebration Suite"** (excerpt)

by Roger Nixon

Album Title: Wind Band Masterworks - Volume 4
 Recording: Texas A&M University Wind Symphony
 Timothy Rhea, conductor
 Publisher: Mark Masters 7064 - MCD

In the past I have commended the Texas A&M Wind Symphony for their precision & professionalism. Wind Band Masterworks IV continues to provide solid performances of fine original works & transcriptions. The ten pieces include The Final Covenant (Tull), Allerseeelen (Strauss/Davis & Fennell), A Movement for Rosa (Camphouse), Savannah River Holiday (Nelson), Cuban Overture (Gershwin/Rogers), Profanation from Jeremiah Symphony (Bernstein/Bencriscutto) and a pair of beloved Grainger compositions; Molly on the Shore and Colonial Song. Opening the recording, in style, is Parade (movement 1) from Roger Nixon's Pacific Celebration Suite. The remaining work is a truly magnificent performance of Morton Gould's Jericho Rhapsody. Another superb program by the Texas A&M University Wind Symphony

**Red from "Blue on Red"** (excerpt)

by Kevin Krumenauer

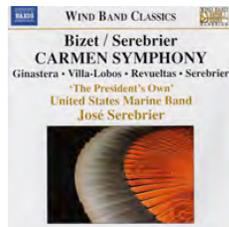
Album Title: Illinois State University Wind Symphony - Stamp, Krumenauer & Maslanka
 Recording: Illinois State University Wind Symphony
 Stephen K. Steele, conductor
 Publisher: Albany-Troy 996

The three works on this fine recording are an example of the high quality performances one expects from the Illinois State University Wind Symphony. One of this issue's MusiClips features Jack Stamp as conductor, this recording features Jack Stamp as composer. Stamp's Symphony No.1-In Memoriam of David Diamond is a portrait of a 20th century composer who was Stamp's mentor & friend. The final movement of Stamp's earlier Divertimento in F is also dedicated to Diamond. Blue on Red by Kevin Krumenauer is a three movement essay on states of psychological & philosophical being; a most interesting work you'll appreciate. Stephen K.Steele and the Illinois State University Wind Symphony are well known for their expertise with the challenging works of David Maslanka. Symphony No.2 is one of the composer's best (the final movement is often played separately) and demands virtuosity, emotion & attention to the most intricate details from the entire wind orchestra. Well recommended.

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BW 2008*The Future of the Bandworld***MusiClips**

by Ira Novoselsky

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**The Wedding from "Carmen Symphony"**

by George Bizet

Album Title: Carmen Symphony
 Recording: "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band
 Jose Serebrier, conductor
 Publisher: Naxos 8.570727

Long a favorite work of composers & audiences alike, George Bizet's opera Carmen has appeared in countless settings. Jose Serebrier has made his own orchestral commentary in twelve scenes and it is this setting, transcribed by Donald Patterson, which opens this musical fiesta. Patterson also transcribed the four dances from Estancia (Alberto Ginastera), including the well known final dance Malambo. Two world premieres by Serebrier are also featured; his resetting of Mexican Dance (Revueltas) and the composer's Night Cry for brass. The remaining work (not counting an encore) is the Concerto Grosso for Wind Quartet & Wind Orchestra by Villa-Lobos. This piece is one of the landmark compositions written for Robert Austin Boudreau's American Wind Symphony. Certainly a worthwhile addition to your listening library.

**Mayflower Overture (excerpt)**

by Ron Nelson

Album Title: The Composer's Voice - Ron Nelson
 Recording: Keystone Wind Ensemble
 Jack Stamp, conductor
 Publisher: Klavier K-11168

The music of Ron Nelson has been very popular with bands & audiences alike for many years. While there are many works to choose from, this outstanding recording focuses on eight compositions, as well as an interview with Nelson. Three fanfares by Nelson will probably be new to most bandfolks but certainly show the composer at his best. The three fanfares are Fanfare for a Celebration, Fanfare for the Kennedy Center & Fanfare for a New Millennium. Alto Saxophonist Keith R. Young provides the virtuoso fireworks for Danza Capriccio; Savannah River Holiday, Mayflower Overture, To the Airborne & Pastorale: Autumn Rune complete the musical program. This fine recording is another welcome addition to Klavier's ongoing "Composer's Voice" series.

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BW 2008*The Future of the Bandworld*

15 Years ago in Bandworld

The State of Your Art

by Tim Lautzenheiser

Vol. 9, #2, p.44 (November - December 1993)

The state of the art is, by definition, the level of development (procedure, process, technique, or science) reached at any particular time as a result of modern technology. It is the cutting edge, the latest and most effective product or data available and, as we all know, it is never static, but constantly being pushed forward, fueled by the human desire for excellence.

What is the State of Your Art?

Before anyone can answer this, we must first identify which part of your agenda is in question. Most people would immediately think the word art would imply: conducting, individual instrumental technique, interpretation, score study, etc. However, let's extend the boundaries of possibilities to include the rehearsal environment and take a critical view an often overlooked area that plays a critical role in the effectiveness of your ensemble's performance, the area of organization and management, and we must all admit; herein lies much room for growth and improvement.

Have you ever been listening to a wonderful performance and suddenly there is a blatant wrong note that immediately draws your attention and then you think, "Ouch...too bad. I'll bet that gets cleaned up real fast in the next rehearsal." However, if it is a weak performance, the individual infractions are almost ignored and your mental conversation shifts to, "Oh my gosh, there is a ton of work to do with this group. Someone really needs to get in there and do some fundamental teaching. It will be a long time before there will ever be an artistic performance from this ensemble." The performers probably feel much the same, except their inner voices might say, "Why should I even try? We are so pathetic. What good will it do to practice? There are so many bad sounds it would cover up any good ones that I might contribute? Nobody in the group cares anyway!"

This negative logic is easy to understand, particularly when described in musical terms. We all understand the harmonic components necessary to establish a state of the art musical performance. However, can we draw a similar parallel to the rehearsal environment? (Though this may be uncomfortable, it is the key to success for those educators who understand the importance of students developing quality habits in every aspect of their lives.) If you walked into a rehearsal facility and observed instrument cases strewn about, percussion equipment left out and being used as make-shift tables, waste paper baskets running over with paper and empty soda cans, coats thrown here and there, music lying on the floor, chairs and stands scattered from wall to wall, what would you think? Can you see that this might have some detrimental effect on the musical aspect of the program? If there is this kind of lack of concern for the physical atmosphere, is there any chance it would bleed over into the rehearsal habits? To answer the question, let's simply reverse the scenario. Enter the same rehearsal hall where the room is neatly set up, the instruments are carefully stacked in lockers, the floors are free from debris, all this dictating a level of discipline that could be transferred directly to the musical expectations. Would it have an impact on the rehearsal habits? One can quickly see the ramifications of one domain (environment) will certainly influence the outcome of another area (the musical product).

What is the state of your art in respect to your environment? Would it be worth devoting some time and energy in the development of this phase of your program? We are in such an urgent rush to spend time on the technical aspect of the music, we might well be overlooking one of the subliminal handicaps preventing us from attaining that much desired goal. Without knowing it we could be sabotaging the forward progress of the group by ignoring the environmental messages the students are receiving about acceptable standards.

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The State of Your Art (continued)

by Tim Lautzenheiser

Vol. 9, #2, p.44 (November - December 1993)

Certainly this is not to suggest that a few hours spent straightening up the rehearsal facilities will make the clarinets play better in tune. However, it may make the individual musicians “strive to play better in tune” with a bit more artistic attitude based on their assessed conclusion that you are serious about them seeking quality in every facet of their musical experience...including their surroundings.

The next step is to make your state of the art become their state of the art. Once the standards are set, they must be owned, administered, and carried out by the members of the group. Just as a fine performer is responsible for intonation, balance, blend, command of the musical part, etc., the members of the organization need to be responsible for the environment and this requires the same amount of individual consideration and attention they give to playing a phrase, caring for a reed, proper posture, etc.

If we expect a group to perform artistically “on stage,” we should expect no less from them “off stage,” and that performance should not just be limited to the time from the downbeat to the release. It is an ongoing effort to self-improvement for the students and certainly for us, their teachers and role models.

For most of us, it is easy much easier to ignore a disorganized music library than it is to sidestep bad intonation. After all, the music library is not going to be seen by the public at the next concert, but those people will certainly be listening to the band’s performance. In essence, it is just a lower priority. We are tempted to just close our office door to avoid personal embarrassment during the booster meeting, rather than simply sit down and organize all of the things stacked on and beside the desk. It’s not that we don’t know what to do, it’s just another task that easily drops to the bottom of the “to do” list. We become our own worst enemy and seem to forget that the contagious habits of our daily patterns will appear (good or bad) in the ensemble’s achievement, the state of their art.

We may be encouraged when we remember the importance of our work. We do what we do to make life better for those who are sharing our journey. This gives more credence to the need to extend the state of our art. In the words of Bryan Lindsay:

“Let the arts inform you and guide you toward excellence. Keep the arts at the center of your consciousness, because beyond all else the arts will best inform you of the nature of human quality.”

We have the wherewithal to empower the students to live a better life. Rarely will any group exceed the expectations of the director. Just as the train follows obediently behind the engine, the young musicians will quickly adapt to the demands and commands of the maestro. With that truth in mind, it is of great importance that we constantly remind ourselves of the importance of our total educational presentations both on and off the podium by asking, “What is the state of my art?”

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BW 2008*The Future of the Bandworld*

20 Years ago in Bandworld

Why Instrumental Music?

by Edwin Kurth

Vol. 4, #2, p.17 (November - December, 1988)

Lasting music appreciation comes from understanding, and understanding comes from active participation.

With the constant re-evaluation of the educational system, frequent assessments of the role of instrumental music within the educational system is necessary. It is important that the objectives and content of instrumental music be clarified in the minds of parents, students, teachers and administrators. Educators should also discuss with students and parents the value of musical experience previous to college or occupational pursuits and explain what colleges and society expect from high school graduates.

So often in our currently scientifically-oriented society, the arts and the objectives they are attempting to attain are misunderstood—especially the role they should play in the public school. Let us, for the purpose of this discussion, channel our thoughts in the direction of music, although many of the following statements will relate to the other arts as well.

At the outset, I hasten to emphasize caution in defining music as we know it in the public schools as “Art.” Here we are forced against a brick wall of semantic complexity that eventually leads us nowhere but deeper into the mysteries of the aesthetic. Music may be defined simply as “sound with definition moving in time.” Here we have a definition devoid of the artistic connotation which could even compare with the definition to read “the science of sound with definition moving in time with mathematical precision.” Here we have, by definition, restricted music to a mechanical, disciplined, scientific process. Surprisingly, this is exactly what should be happening in the public schools in the early stages of the musical training of young musicians. The all important fundamentals must become part of every young musician’s life. Embouchure, breath control, rhythmic and technical discipline form the rock-solid foundation upon which the structure of artistic musical performance is built.

We too often accept the idea that music has some intangible aesthetic value which will feed and enrich the soul if we expose ourselves to the stimulus of musical sound. There is nothing further from the truth. Lasting music appreciation comes from understanding, and understanding comes from disciplined participation. Through active participation and experience with good teachers who emphasize the importance of fundamentals, a young person develops a sensitivity to tone quality, pitch definition, dynamic control and musical interpretation. This sensitivity to a musical “feedback” and the resultant instantaneous responses will continue to mature in a musical environment if the intellectual disciplines of music are constantly emphasized. The aesthetic grows from the early fundamentals and discipline.

If persons who are not musicians watch and listen to the members of a fine ensemble perform, they will sense a feeling of magnetic sensitivity between the players and the conductor. The importance of intonation, attack, release, rhythm, and dynamic texture are only a few of the tangible factors which are immediately evident even to the non-musician. The artistic aspect or the intangible commodity which makes the scientific, mathematical and technical aesthetic is learned sensitivity, insight, and in general, a perception to the black and white of the paper that only comes from hours of experience, training and practice. First a dedication to the disciplines which make music—then comes the art. This sensitivity is transferable to all other aspects of life.

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BW 2008*The Future of the Bandworld*

20 Years ago in Bandworld

Why Instrumental Music? (continued)

by Edwin Kurth

Vol. 4, #2, p.17 (November - December 1988)

Music, if properly approached, will increase the young musicians sensitivity to and perception of the world around him to the degree that he is willing to dedicate himself and submit to the all important discipline that music demands. The psychological transfer of this musical perception, that is learned through disciplined performance, is overwhelming.

The untrained musician should try listening to a string quartet with eyes closed in a quiet room, clearing the mind of the general turmoil of daily living, and listening for the linear motion of the piece, the rhythmic movement and the melodic texture. Then look at a fine painting, clouds in the sky, the falling rain, the patterns of growing things, or even the movement of a tall tree swaying in the breeze. The sharpened awareness of the perceptual field whetted by careful and analytical listening will be somewhat evident even with only listening participation. The music has become an emotional message to the inventiveness of the imagination. Think of what performance, constantly disciplined, will do to sharpen the general perception of a student.

Can you imagine a class in appreciation of dill pickles, ripe olives, snails or yogurt, if the instructor were to simply stand in front of the class and eat, describing the flavor and telling you why you should appreciate the unusual flavor of these delicacies. Music is the same, in that personal participation and the experience through education is the keynote. One month's experience in performance will increase the expectancy of the lasting appreciation one-hundred fold.

What are the results of years of musical experience in the public schools as demonstrated by observable behavior? What is expected of students with a musical background regardless of whether or not they are planning on pursuing music as a career?

1. They are expected to be disciplined both emotionally and technically and prepared to respond to their total environment intellectually and emotionally.
2. They are expected to be open minded and receptive to new ideas.
3. They are expected to be ambitious and sincere.
4. They are expected to be prepared to dedicate themselves to something.
5. They are expected to have a thorough foundation in the fundamentals of instrumental performance.

Certainly no scholar would minimize the multiplicity of intellectual demands for fine musical performance. Serious music of any kind requires the greatest concentration and intellect.

THIS IS THE JUSTIFICATION OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.



Key Concepts

Oboe Assembly
Full Conservatory

Instrument Assembly

Depending on the model of Oboe you have, the instruction for assembly differs. This page will be dedicated to the assembly of a full conservatory Oboe. Page 5 will cover the assembly of a student model Oboe.

Upper Joint



Bell

Lower Joint

Assembly Instructions- for Full Conservatory Oboe

1. Start with the Bell. (figure 1.1)
2. Add the Lower Joint to the Bell. (figure 1.2)
3. Watch the Bridge Key for correct alignment. (fig. 1.3)
4. Then place the Upper Joint into the Lower Joint. (figure 1.4)
5. Again, watch the Bridge Keys between the two joints for correct alignment. (fig. 1.5 & 1.6)
6. Finally, place the reed into the top of the Upper Joint. (fig. 1.7)



figure 1.1

figure 1.2

figure 1.3

figure 1.4

figure 1.5

figure 1.6

figure 1.7



Key Concepts

Oboe Assembly
Student Model

Instrument Assembly

Assembling the Student Model of the Oboe is easier because there is one less bridge key to worry about. Student models of the Oboe will also not be as fully functional as the Conservatory Oboe, because the Student model does not have the Low Bb and Left F keys. Do not worry about that just yet; you will see that in future pages.

Lower Joint



Bell

Upper Joint

Assembly Instructions- for Student Model Oboe

1. Start with the Bell. (figure 1.1)
2. Add the Lower Joint to the Boot. (figure 1.2)
3. Then place the Upper Joint into the Lower Joint. (figure 1.3)
4. Watch the Bridge Keys between the two joints for correct alignment. (fig. 1.4 & 1.5)
5. Finally, place the reed into the top of the Upper Joint. (fig. 1.6)



figure 1.1



figure 1.2



figure 1.3



figure 1.4

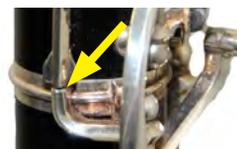


figure 1.5



figure 1.6



Key Concepts

Reeds

Reeds

Enough cannot be said about the importance of the right reed for double reed instruments. Unless you are taking private lessons which include reed making, you will need to buy manufactured reeds. Most reed makers try to make the best possible reeds, but not all are worth buying. Below are pictures and captions for good reed selection. Once proper reeds are selected, use at least three in rotation. Remember, they must be soaked for five minutes before using. All the following pictures have been enlarged to help show the flaws possible in double reeds.

Good Shape



Too Open



Too Closed



Corners not together



Asymmetrical (top side is taller)





Key Concepts

Embouchure Formation

Embouchure

The embouchure formation is critical to the success of playing any wind instrument. The following steps will help you make that great embouchure and a great sound.

Steps for the embouchure are from "Embou-Sure" page 9-10 W.I.B.C Publishing, Copyright 1987

Step #1



Say, "No Oboe" in your best British accent. Closing in the corners of your mouth. Lips should be like a firm springy cushion

Step #2



Place the tip of the reed, no more than 1/8th of an inch, into the mouth.

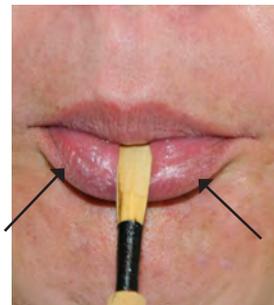
Step #3



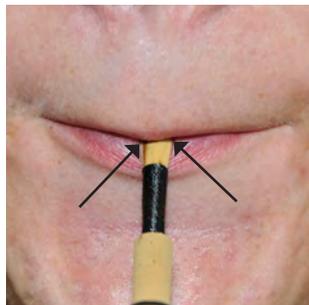
Keep lips firm against the reed, throat open and blow from the abdomen.

Incorrect Embouchures

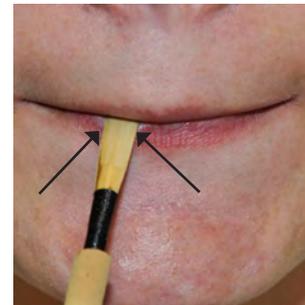
There are many different variables that can go wrong with the Oboe embouchure. The following are examples of what NOT to do.



Lips pursed out too much.



Reed too far into the mouth.



Reed not centered in the mouth.



Key Concepts

Posture

Posture

Second in importance only to the embouchure, posture is critical to the player's overall success on the Oboe. Bad posture, just as a bad embouchure, will greatly affect tone quality. The posture for the Oboe is just like the Saxophone, with the exception of the position of the instrument between the legs for the Oboe. Below are examples of postures both good and bad. Remember, just as with Saxophone, that the instrument comes to the player, not the player to the instrument.

Good Posture, with instrument



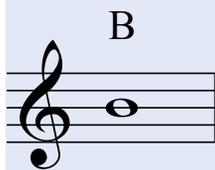
Good Posture, front view



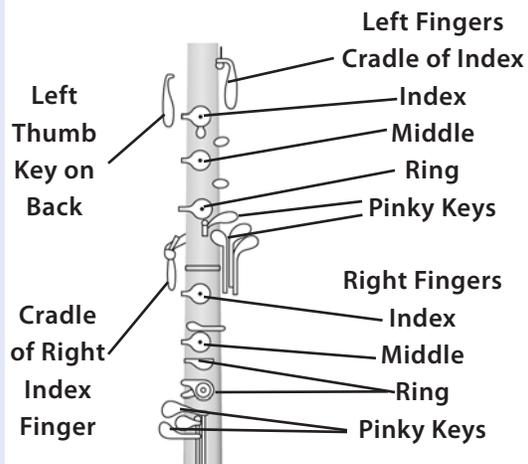
BAD Posture.
Both images at the left show poor posture. Head tilted down and instrument too straight up and down. The student is not sitting up, thus not being able to use full lung capacity



Key Concepts



First Three Notes



Now that the student is ready to play, let's begin. Start by playing the first music example on the Saxophone. After playing the example on Saxophone, play the second song on the Oboe with the same fingerings as Saxophone. The player should be able to see the similarities between the Saxophone and the Oboe. There are differences as will be pointed out in future pages, but there are quite a few similarities that will make this transition to Oboe very swift.

Merrily We Roll Along

Traditional

Alto Saxophone



Merrily We Roll Along

Traditional

Oboe



Au Claire de la Luna

Traditional

Oboe



Now have some fun with it!

Merrily We Jazz Along

Case

Oboe





Key Concepts

F# Gb



E



D



D, E, & F#

Similar to the first three notes, D, E and F# on the Oboe are exactly like D, E and F natural on the Saxophone. You are probably asking, "Why is F# not the same as F# on the Saxophone?" The answer is in the bore's shape. The Oboe is a cylindrical bore instrument, while the Saxophone has a conical bore. This fact and the length of the Oboe changes the Overtone series causing F# on Oboe to be fingered the same as F on the Saxophone.

Look out it is F#

Case

Twinkle, Twinkle

Mozart

Turkish March

Mozart



Key Concepts

The 3 F's

Depending on your model of Oboe, pictured below, there are three ways to finger F. Very similar to Bb on the Saxophone, each one has its particular rule of when to be used. The alternates Left F or Forked F should be used before or after Bb, B, C, C#, D and Eb. Regular F should be used in every other situation. If you have an instrument with the Left F capabilities, Forked F should never be used. This is due to tuning and ease of playing.



Model with
Left F Key



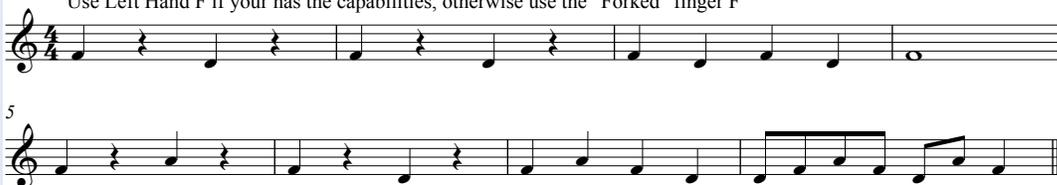
Model without
Left F Key

Regular F



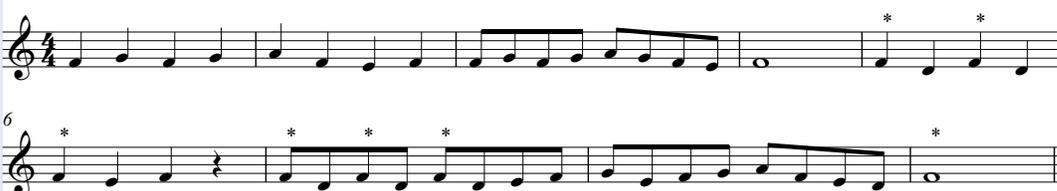
Forked or Left F

Use Left Hand F if you have the capabilities, otherwise use the "Forked" finger F



Going back and forth on F

* means to use an alternate F





Key Concepts



Alternate



The Right Pinky

Following are three notes that use the right pinky finger and not just two like on Saxophone. This is the biggest change in fingerings between the two instruments. It must be remembered that the lowest note, C, is the closest key to the right hand ring finger key and vice versa for the highest note Eb/D#. The middle key is used for C#

Chromatic Study

Musical notation for a chromatic study in 4/4 time. The first line shows a descending scale from C4 to C3. The second line shows an ascending scale from C3 to C4. The third line shows a chromatic scale with triplets.

There is an alternate fingering for D#/Eb. The rule to using this fingering is relatively easy. Use this alternate fingering when a C#/Db comes before or after the D#/Eb. Play the following scale using the alternate fingering.

Marche Slav

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Musical notation for the beginning of 'Marche Slav' in 4/4 time. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).



Key Concepts

G#, Bb & C

Here are three more notes, each with their own interesting technique. The G# on Oboe is exactly like G# on the Saxophone. Bb on the Oboe is similar to Bb on Saxophone, the difference is the right index finger is on the key, not on a separate palm key. Finally the C on Oboe is exactly like a Bb in a Bb to B trill fingering on the Saxophone.

Mary has a funky new look!

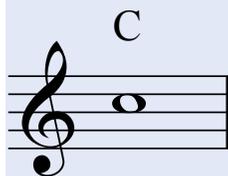


Old Mac



Chromatic Review

Start this exercise slow and gradually gain speed





Key Concepts

C# Db

D

D# Eb

Alternate
D# Eb

Half-Hole Technique

The half-hole technique for the Oboe does not actually cover half of the hole of the left index finger key. The technique to perform the half-hole on Oboe is to slide the left index finger down onto the plateau of the left index finger key. To help you understand, below are pictures displaying the half-hole technique.



Left index key
with no finger



Regular way to
play the left in-
dex finger key



Half-hole technique

The Half Hole Experience

Case

Once again there is an alternate fingering for D#/Eb and it is almost identical to the lower octave. The rule is still the same: use this alternate fingering when a C#/Db comes before or after the D#/Eb. Play the following scale using the alternate fingering.

Concert Db Scale



Key Concepts



Octave Displacement

These next five notes are quite possibly the easiest to learn. E, F, F#, G and G# have the same fingerings as their octave lower counterparts. The only difference is the use of the first octave key. The first octave key is in the same location on the Oboe as it is on the Saxophone. As with the lower octave the rules surround F natural still apply. If you cannot remember, please revisit page 11.

Do you have the Octane to go the Octave?



Key Concepts



The Second Octave Key

The new notes on this page are the only notes that require the use of the Oboe's second octave key. As you will see in the pictures below, the key is played with the curve of the left index finger. It is perfectly acceptable to leave down the first octave key when using the second octave key.



Second octave key not in use.



Second octave key in use.

Slight angle change to the finger and press down with crook.

Second Octave Workout

Musical notation for a Second Octave Workout in 4/4 time. The piece consists of three lines of music. The first line contains measures 1 through 8, the second line contains measures 9 through 14, and the third line contains measures 15 through 22. The key signature has one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4.

Habanera from "Carmen"

Georges Bizet (1838 - 1879)

Musical notation for the Habanera from "Carmen" in 2/4 time. The piece consists of two lines of music. The first line contains measures 1 through 8, and the second line contains measures 9 through 16. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 2/4.



Key Concepts

Scales

Scales

Scales are an important element to the education of every musician. It helps the musician by making them aware of the key they are about to play. Just being able to play each scale is not enough, each musician must master every scale to be truly proficient on his or her instrument. Start by playing each scale slowly, then gradually take them at a faster tempo. If there are a few unfamiliar notes, use the Fingering Chart on pages 21-24.

Concert Bb Major Scale



Concert B Major Scale



Concert C Major Scale



Concert C# Major Scale



Concert D Major Scale



Concert Eb Major Scale





Key Concepts

Scales

Scales, continued.

Concert E Major Scale

Concert F Major Scale

Concert F# Major Scale

Concert G Major Scale

Concert Ab Major Scale

Concert A Major Scale



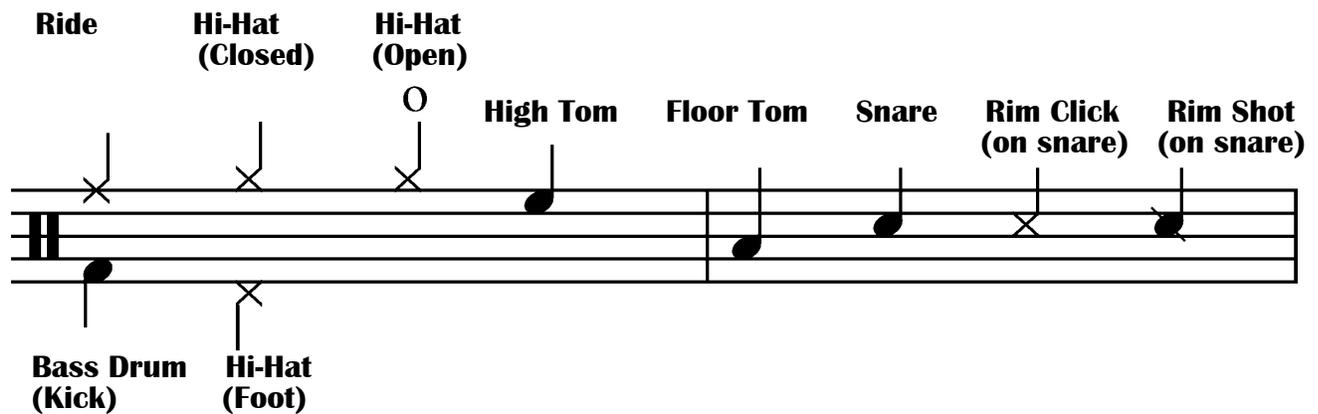
Chapter One

The Tools ...

Music Notation for Drummers

NOTE HEADS & POSITION ON THE STAFF

Drum set notation will often vary from publisher to publisher. Typically the parts will denote any special sticks or equipment changes needed. For the purposes of this manual, the following notation will be used consistently:



Generally, cymbals are notated with an x-shaped note head. Drums are marked with a regular oval note head. If the stem of the note points upward, then that note should be played with your hands. If it points downward, play that note with your feet.

In this book, you will see the ride cymbal marked by a diamond-shaped note head to help the beginner distinguish between it and the closed hi-hat. It will always be placed on the top line of the staff, exactly where the ride cymbal normally appears.



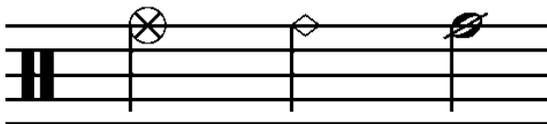
RHYTHMIC NOTATION

This manual, written for music educators and percussion students, already assumes coherent understanding of rhythm. Should you need additional assistance in reading and performing the simple rhythms presented in the following pages, investigate the following *FREE* online resources!

- **Music Theory Resources: First Aid for Struggling Students**
http://www.musictheoryresources.com/members/FA_rhythm.htm
- **eMusicTheory.com: Interactive Rhythm Performance Drill**
<http://www.emusictheory.com/practice/rhythmPerf.html>
- **eMusicTheory.com: Interactive Rhythm Dictation Drill**
<http://www.emusictheory.com/practice/rhythmDict.html>

SPECIALTY CYMBALS

Notation for special cymbal striking methods varies from publisher to publisher, but here are some fairly common options.



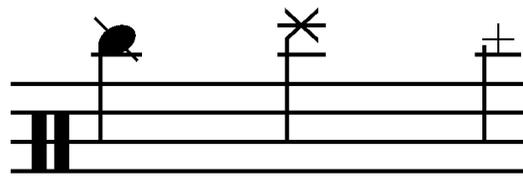
Bell of Ride

Crash Cymbal

**Splash Cymbal
(or China Cymbal)**

OTHER ACCESSORIES

The modern drummer now utilizes accessories such as triangle, tambourine, and maracas. Most publishers will identify these instruments with text directly in the part, but standard notation generally assumes they will be denoted as in the box to the right.



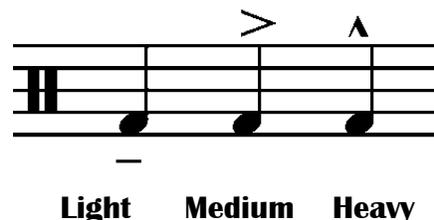
**Mounted
Tambourine**

**Mounted
Triangle**

Maraca

DYNAMIC NOTATION

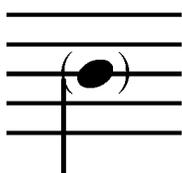
Aside from the standard *piano*, *forte*, etc., many composers use singular note dynamics and accents for special punches in the sound. Since few percussion instruments sustain pitch, the description of *marcato* and *tenuto* vary slightly from the wind instrument world.



Light Medium Heavy

GHOST NOTES

There are also examples of anti-accents or “Ghost Notes” in percussion set playing. This simply means to play the affected note(s) softer than the accompanying patterns. Many percussionists describe this technique as being *felt* more than *heard*. Ghost notes are particularly popular in R&B and rock ballad/shuffles. Many times, ghost notes will not be notated, but implied. If they are notated by the composer, the drummer will likely see a u-shaped note head, brackets or parentheses around the affected notes.



ONE of several possibilities for ghost note notation.

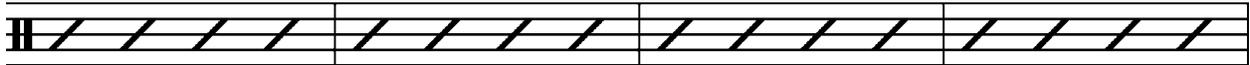
SLASH NOTATION

Many times, a chart will not show each instrument - it may simply show slashes that imply the drummer continue playing in an appropriate groove. It is up to the musician to have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of which patterns accentuate the style of the music best. The coming pages paired with other reputable resources will assist you in this journey!

What you might see..

12-Bar Blues Slow Groove

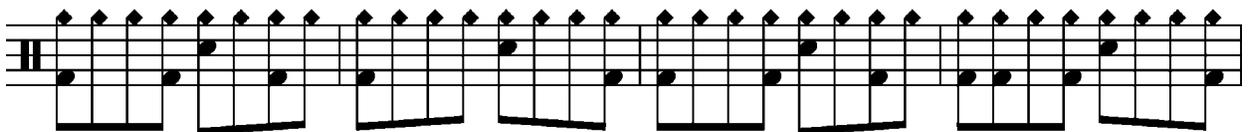
♩ = 76



What you should play:

12-Bar Blues Slow Groove

♩ = 76

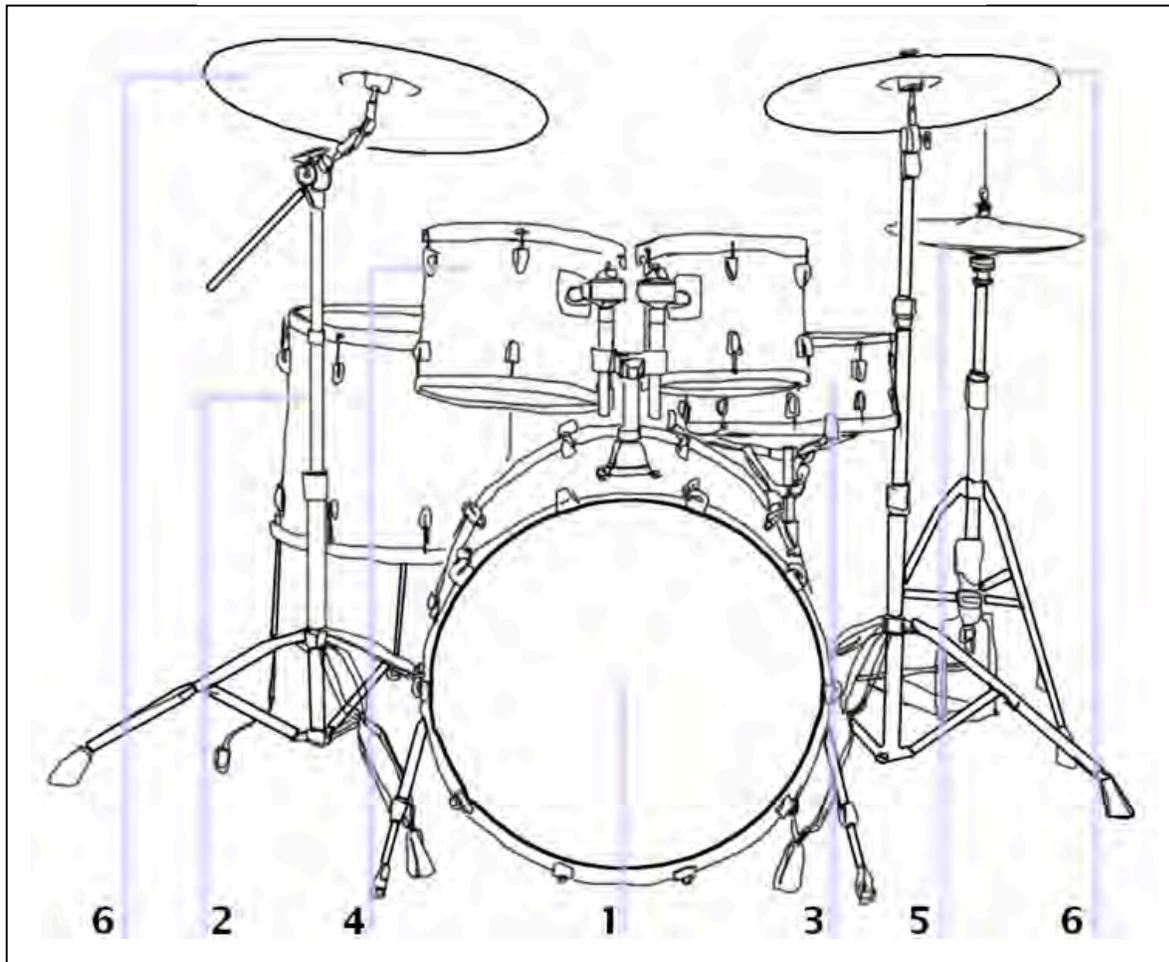


Anatomy of a Drum Kit

SETTING THE SET

There are countless variations on the standard drum set layout and every player will develop preferences. Most right-handed players opt to play the bass drum and hi-hat/ride cymbals with the RIGHT side of the body, and the snare and hi-hat pedal with the LEFT side of the body. The arms cross in order to strike the hi-hat with a stick. Choosing to alter this set up is most common among left-handed drummers, who will likely reverse the set up. However, it is also acceptable for left-handed drummers to learn to play on a right-handed set up for convenience and teaching purposes.

The Traditional Right-Handed Set



(image: Wikipedia)

- 1. Bass Drum**
- 2. Floor Tom**
- 3. Snare Drum**
- 4. Mounted Toms**
- 5. Hi-Hat Cymbal**
- 6. Crash & Ride Cymbals**

WHAT SHOULD YOU HAVE?

DRUM SIZES

A well-equipped standard drum set usually consists of the following items:

- Snare measuring 5”x 14”
- Mounted Toms (2) measuring 8”x 12” and 9”x 13”
- Floor Tom (1) measuring either 14”x 14” or 16”x 16”
- Bass Drum measuring 14”x 22”
- Ride Cymbal measuring 20-22” in diameter
- Hi-Hat Cymbal measuring 13-15” in diameter
- Crash Cymbal measuring 14-20” in diameter

Shells:

Drum shells can be made of many different materials. Here are some possibilities:

**Carved wood
Glued wood
Fiberglass
Ceramic
Metal
Wood fiber & resin**



The Throne:

The nickname for the drummer’s stool is “the throne” and it is a crucial component of the drum kit.

A quality, comfortable throne can prevent back problems and injury. A chair or regular stool is not sufficient! Visit a music shop and select a throne that fits you the best – remember you’ll be spending a LOT of time sitting on it. 😊



Implements: Sticks & Brushes

First and foremost, use quality equipment!

If your sticks start looking like these, invest in a new pair!



Q: I know what drum sticks are, but what is a “rute”?

A: Rutes are bundles of birch dowels bound together into a handle. Because there are multiple tips contacting the drum head, they create a unique and versatile sound. Many rutes have adjustable bands to control the sound – everything from crisp to raspy & splashy. Great for creating a specialty sound!

For Jazz Drumming:

Sticks: Vic Firth AJ2, Vic Firth 7A, Vic Firth SD4 Combo, Pro-Mark/Bill Bruford SD4W, Pro-Mark Pro-Round TXPR5AW, Pro-Mark MJZ-7

Brushes: Vic Firth HB

For Latin/Ethnic Drumming:

Sticks: Vic Firth AJ2, Vic Firth 7A, Vic Firth SD4 Combo, Pro-Mark SD9W

Rutes: Vic Firth 505, Vic Firth/Steve Smith Tala Wand

Specialty: Vic Firth/Emil Richards Maraca Mallet

For Rock Drumming:

Sticks: Vic Firth 5A, Vic Firth 5AN, Vic Firth F1, Vic Firth 55A, Vic Firth Extreme 5AN, Vic Firth 5B or Vic Firth Rock, Pro-Mark SD2W, Pro-Mark/Jason Bonham SD531W, Pro-Mark/Neil Peart PW747W

Rutes: Vic Firth 606

TIPS FOR TIPS:

The tip of the traditional snare stick can be made of many different materials. Also, the rounder the tip shape, the clearer your cymbal patterns will sound. Select your tip based upon the sound you'd like to achieve. Here are some options:

Nylon: Crisp and bright, punchy sound

Hickory: Resilient (hickory is one of the strongest woods!), dense, and heavy

Oak: heavy, solid, and very traditional-sounding

Maple: lightweight and perfect for small ensemble or jazz

Maintaining the Kit

Your Drum Set, Your Investment

When you purchase a drum set, it is important you realize the fragility of the instruments and the constant duty to oversee the care and maintenance of the components. It is YOUR set and YOU are responsible for it's care! Let's highlight a few concepts all drummers should reflect upon:

1. Everyday Care

- a. Cleanliness – yes, even your much-practiced-upon drums will get dusty! A soft, damp cloth is all you need to wipe the shells and hardware. Remember to dry any moisture away when you're finished! Many cleaners and scouring pads are too abrasive for the fragile drums and wooden shells – avoid using these.
- b. Storage – have a system that you can commit to and that is easy to accomplish. When you take your kit out of our regular practice facility, use any cases or covers you may own. If you don't own cases, use blankets or sleeping bags
- c. Room – humidity (or extreme lack thereof!) can take its toll on your set. Buy a humidifier or dehumidifier and monitor your room from time to time. Also, keep your drums out of direct sunlight and away from the heater or air conditioning sources.
- d. Implements – a stick bag is a simple way to keep your implements organized and secure. It's a twenty-dollar investment that will hold sometimes HUNDREDS of dollars of equipment. Use it and don't lose it!

2. Tuning the Drums

- a. Why Tune? There is a pitch (sometimes *many* pitches) in even the “non-pitched” percussion instruments. Drum heads are adjustable so the player can find the best tone and resonating possibilities for the drum.
- b. Sweet Spot – this is simply the spot where the drum is happiest. It will sound the fullest and best here, and it will vary from drum to drum precisely where the sweet spot occurs. To find the sweet spot, adjust the pitch a little at a time until you hear a tone without a lot of overtones. A properly tuned drum doesn't need as much dampening as an improperly tuned drum – bonus!
- c. DRUMS WITH LUGS
 1. Start with the drumhead and rim removed, with the drum sitting firmly on the floor.
 2. Wipe the edge of the shell with a clean, dry cloth to remove dirt.
 3. Place head on shell, then rim over the head.
 4. Tighten lugs firmly by hand, working in this order: 12 o'clock, six, one, seven, two, eight, three, nine, etc.
 5. Press down firmly on the rim over each lug and tighten firmly. Go in the same order as in step #4.
 6. After all lugs are secure, press with your hand on the center of the head (gently!) until you hear a faint crackling sound. This is just the

- glue on the head making the sound. By pushing down, you are seating the head firmly on the shell and ensuring a solid contact.
7. Use your drum key to work around the lugs in the same order as before. Turn the key one-quarter turn at each lug until you see no more wrinkles. Go around as many times as necessary (probably not more than twice)
 8. Check the pitch of the drum – hit in the center of the head.
 9. If you like that sound, you can stop. If not, go back to step #7 and keep repeating till you've found your sweet spot. The goal is a freely-ringing tone with not too many overtones.
 10. Additional tuning process: You can lightly tap the head about an inch inside the rim near each of the lugs. Try to make the pitch at each lug the same across the drum. This takes some practice, but will allow you to remove the extra overtones in a drum that is unpleasant sounding.

d. DRUMS WITH ROPES

1. Untie the loose end first (usually the longest section)
2. To raise the pitch of the entire drum, feed the loose end of rope under the adjacent two vertical strands.
3. Keep the rope taut, then loop the rope back across the second strand.
4. Go under the first strand again
5. Bracing the drum securely against a table or your knee, pull the rope tight until the first strand crosses the second. The rope should be straight.
6. Continue these steps until you have the pitch you desire.
7. Finally, tie the loose end back up and you're all tuned up!



Drum Key



Stick Bag



Chapter Two

Basic Technique...

Holding the Sticks & Brushes

G
R
I
P



Matched Grip is the most versatile and common among drummers in current times. The hands look the same - they match - and the fulcrum is the contact point between the thumb and index finger. The remaining fingers curl around the stick and provide light support. The stick should go up and down when your palm is facing the floor.

Traditional Grip was utilized when military drums hung over the players' shoulder at an angle. In order to reach the drum, one hand had to adjust by holding the stick differently. Traditional Grip today means the left hand cradles the stick - the fulcrum is the stick's resting point between the thumb and index finger. The stick is held by between the middle and ring finger, while the index and middle fingers provide the control of motion over the grip. To create motion, the wrist and arm actually rotate from the elbow. The right hand holds the stick in the manner described above - Matched Grip. Both hands should hold sticks loosely with only enough pressure to keep stick motion controlled.

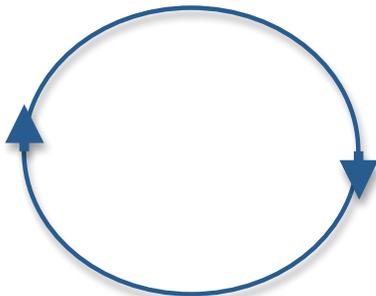


B
R
U
S
H
E
S

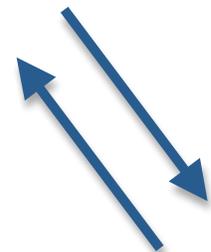


Used mainly in jazz ballad drumming, there are two distinct techniques. The swirl technique utilizes clock positions – for this reason we’ll call it the Clock technique.

The snare hand (left) travels AROUND the perimeter of the snare in a clockwise motion. It will hit the 10 o’clock position on counts 1 and 3 of the measure. Counts 2 and 4 appear at the 4 o’clock position. This hand is providing a constant, even swirl sound.

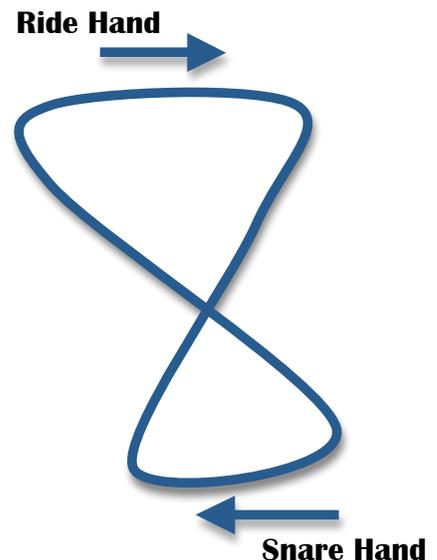


The ride hand (right) travels across the snare head in an angular motion – but still uses the clock positions as reference. Here it is exactly opposite the left hand. Beats 1, the ‘and’ of two, beat 3, and the ‘and’ of 4 occur at the 4 o’clock position. Beats 2 and 4 happen at 10 o’clock. This brush essentially skips across the drum while playing the groove’s time pattern.



The second technique, the Figure Eight, requires both hands to play the swirl sound. The tips of the brushes never (or rarely) leave the surface of the drum.

In this technique, the ride hand starts beat one at the top of the drum. The snare hand begins each measure at the bottom of the drum. At beat 2 and 4, the hands are at opposite ends of the drum. The drummer is able to subtly accent all four beats with both hands. A left-handed drummer would reverse the direction and initial placement of hands in this technique.



BAD HABITS TO AVOID –



Lazy Traditional Grip -
Make sure your left hand is supporting the stick!
Curl the fingers around the stick more to provide stability.



Poor Matched Grip –
Remember the fulcrum is between the thumb and index finger. The index finger should never creep down the stick!

PLACEMENT ON THE DRUM



Watch the angle between the hands – if you are using matched grip, the hands should appear as mirror images of each other!

Fancy Footwork

Proper Pedal Set Up: Your knee should be directly above your ankle. Adjust your seat so this is achieved with both feet.



Creating SOUND with your Feet:

- First lift your knee
- Then, drop your foot into the pedal
- Applying slight forward pressure as you push down creates a more solid sound.

On Bass Drum: Allow beater to bounce off the head so it can ring generously.

On Hi-hat: The height of your toes affects the amount of time cymbals will ring.



Beginning Coordination Patterns

Feet First:

LEFT FOOT is on the hi-hat pedal. Notes for this instrument will be notated as an X-shaped note on the one space under the staff.

RIGHT FOOT is on the bass drum pedal. Notes for this instrument are notated as a regular-shaped note head on the bottom space of the staff.

Try these patterns slowly. Set metronome to 60 bpm and increase only after several successful run-throughs.

1

R R R R L L L L R L R L

2

R L R R L L L R R L R L

3

4



Hands Next:

RIGHT HAND plays the ride cymbal when a diamond-shaped note head appears on the top line of the staff.

LEFT HAND plays snare (on the head) when a 3rd-space note appears.
LEFT HAND plays a rim click (rim of snare) when a 3rd-space x-shaped note appears.

5

R R R R L L L L L L L L

6

R L L R R L R L R R L

Make sure that when the hands play together they sound as one - no flams in these examples!

7

8

9



Independence Patterns

Hands & Feet Together:

For now, we'll keep the same instruments as the previous pages. Here's a reminder:

LEFT HAND: Snare (watch for rim clicks!)

LEFT FOOT: Hi-hat pedal

RIGHT HAND: Ride cymbal

RIGHT FOOT: Bass drum pedal

The image displays six staves of musical notation, numbered 10 through 15. Each staff consists of two staves: a top staff for the right hand and a bottom staff for the left hand. The notation includes various rhythmic symbols such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, along with dynamic markings like accents and slurs. The bottom staff of each system includes additional symbols for the left foot (hi-hat pedal) and right foot (bass drum pedal), represented by 'x' marks and vertical lines. The notation is presented in a clear, black-and-white format, suitable for a music book or magazine.

Use Snare,
Ride, Bass
Drum, and Hi-
Hat (Foot)

Beginning Etudes for Drum Set

Laura Molnar

#1

$\text{♩} = 60$

Etude #1 is in common time (C) with a tempo of 60 beats per minute. It consists of 8 measures. Measures 1 and 2 are simple quarter-note patterns. Measures 3 and 4 introduce eighth-note patterns. Measures 5 through 8 feature more complex eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns, including some syncopation.

#2

$\text{♩} = 80$

Etude #2 is in common time (C) with a tempo of 80 beats per minute. It consists of 8 measures. Measures 1 and 2 are simple quarter-note patterns. Measures 3 and 4 introduce eighth-note patterns. Measures 5 through 8 feature more complex eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns, including some syncopation and accents.

#3

Etude #3 is in 3/4 time with a common time signature (C). It consists of 10 measures. Measures 1 and 2 are simple quarter-note patterns. Measures 3 and 4 introduce eighth-note patterns. Measures 5 through 10 feature more complex eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns, including some syncopation.

#4

Etude #4 is in 5/4 time with a common time signature (C). It consists of 5 measures. Measures 1 and 2 are simple quarter-note patterns. Measures 3 and 4 introduce eighth-note patterns. Measure 5 features a complex eighth-note and sixteenth-note pattern.



Chapter Three

Jazz & Swing...

Basic Pattern & Style

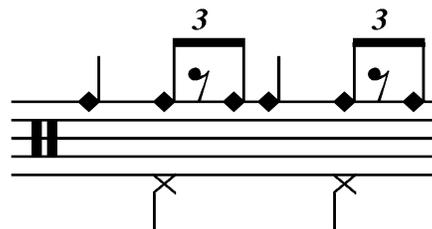


NEW TRADITIONS

FLASHBACK!

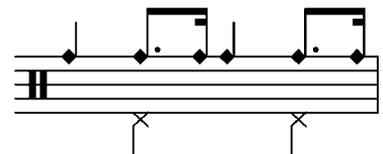
Did you know that at the beginning of the 20th century, jazz drummers typically played a backbeat on snare while the bass drum sounded on all four counts of each measure?! If you can find a recording of ragtime music from the early 1900's you will see how "square" early jazz seems by today's standards.

Today, drummers want to avoid playing too much bass drum – it can make the overall sound of the jazz ensemble too heavy and begin to invade the territory of the bass guitar & keyboard players. The most standard interpretation of a jazz or swing style beat is this:

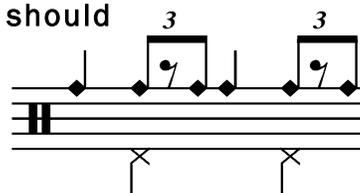


LEARNING TO SWING

Occasionally you may see this in a jazz band chart:



Unless the composer denotes otherwise, it should be interpreted as this:

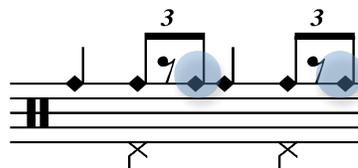


Anticipate the Beat

- Don't speed up, but think of playing each note a millisecond before the metronome click.
- Helps keep the jazz ensemble in time and allows you to control exactly where the pulse should be.

Emphasize the last note of the triplet

- "Playing on the back end of the beat" – it is a subtle accent that is often not notated but generally implied.
- This note is essentially the pick-up to the following beat.



Practice Exercises

LEVEL ONE: Swing Feel on Cymbals

First, get the basic ride cymbal pattern with just your right hand. Remember the implied accents.

Once comfortable with this groove, add a backbeat on counts two and four in the hi-hat with the left foot.

LEVEL TWO: Add Drums

Now, keep the pattern the same, but add a soft snare tap (ghost note) on count four with your left hand.

Once you have mastered that, try adding another ghosted snare on count two. Notice your left hand and left foot work together!

Add a bass drum pedal on beats one and three – remove the snare the first time you try this. Remember not to over-accentuate the bass drum – play it rather softly.

Then, once you have confidence – go for it! Both hands and both feet are swinging!

More Advanced

**LEVEL THREE:
Cymbal Tricks**

ALTERNATE HI-HAT TECHNIQUES: LET'S TRY PLAYING OUR RIDE CYMBAL PATTERN ON THE HI-HAT! USE YOUR RIGHT HAND, AND REMEMBER THESE BASICS:

o = Play an open hi-hat. Strike cymbal as toe raises off the pedal slightly. This releases the pressure holding the cymbals together & lets them ring.
 + = Play a closed hi-hat. Strike cymbal while toe pushes hi-hat pedal flat to the floor. This creates a short, abrupt hi-hat sound.
 (*Remember jazz hi-hat technique: heel stays off the floor the entire time!*)

7

o + 3 o o + 3 o



Now, go back through #4, 5, and 6 on the previous page. Substitute this new hi-hat technique for the ride cymbal parts you've already mastered! This new texture can be very effective when your jazz ensemble is playing softly or while featuring solo instruments in the lower tessitura (trombone, bass guitar, etc.).

VARIATIONS ON THE RIDE CYMBAL PATTERN: GO BACK TO RIGHT HAND ON THE RIDE CYMBAL AND TRY THESE FUN NEW RHYTHMS!

8

3 9 3



EXERCISES 8, 9, 10 & 11 SIMPLY SHIFT THE LOCATION OF THE TRIPLETS

10

3 11 3

**LEVEL
FOUR:
Style
Elements**

Shifting Accents: Exercise #12 forces the player to watch for both TIES and ACCENTS. Try each measure individually first, then piece together. Keep a metronome going and gradually increase your tempo! Notice how the emphasis is on the *pick-up* or last subdivision of the triplet. This keeps the piece swinging.

Four on the Floor – This is an old-fashioned technique that not many musicians employ in modern day drumming. It is useful when the band lacks a solid bass player—here the bass drum essentially “doubles” that part. For the same reason, it is very easy (and very tasteless!) to inadvertently cover up the bass player. If you choose to utilize this style, be cautious of the dynamic at which you play the quarter notes in the bass drum. Try playing #13 and #14 with this in mind.

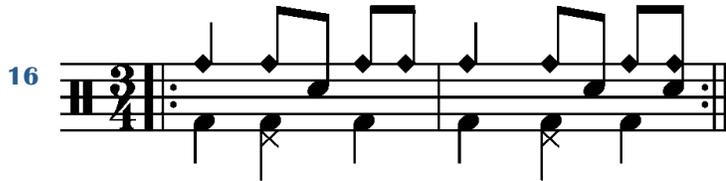
Chicago Shuffle (Jazz Shuffle) – One of the few “Four on the Floor” patterns that are valuable to today’s drummer. Excellent for blues-inspired tunes, this groove is most practical in a large ensemble or during a very loud phrase of the song. Notice that the snare drum notes are ghosted during all four beats of the measure. #15 takes a lot of practice—the player must not only coordinate the unison hand patterns, but also monitor the dynamics between the right and left.



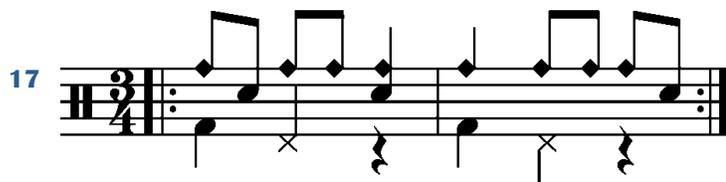
1930's Chicago

MORE JAZZ & SWING...

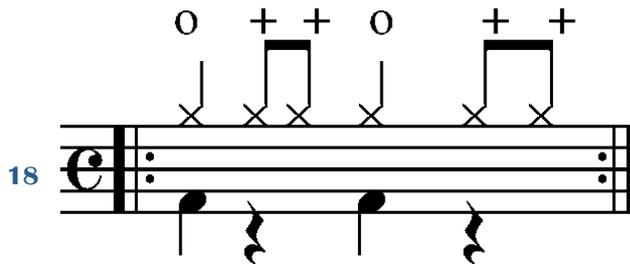
Jazz Waltz in Three



Jazz Waltz in One



Jazz Two Feel

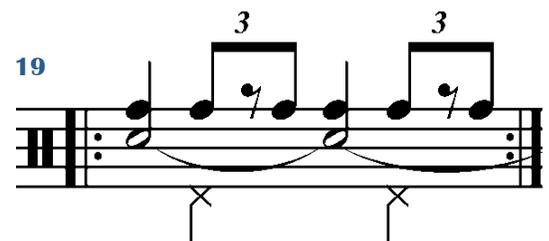


All Eighth Notes on this page should be played in a SWING feel – Remember many publishers do not use triplet notation but ASSUME you'll play it the correct way!

Adding Brushes to a Ballad

See Chapter Two- Should you use a Figure Eight or a Clock technique for this groove??

- *Time pattern (RH brush)
- *Swirl (LH brush)
- Hi-Hat (Foot)



*** Both brushes play on the snare head in this groove!**

Clarinet 1
Soprano Sax
Trumpet 1

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

f *mf*

(A)

(B)

p-f

1.

2.

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Clarinet 2
Trumpet 2

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

f *mf*

(A)

(B)

p-f

1.

2.

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Clarinet 3

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

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Bass Clarinet

Jingle Bells

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Allegretto

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Jingle Bells

Allegretto

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Jingle Bells

Allegretto

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Tenor Sax
T.C. Baritone

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

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Baritone Sax

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

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Trombone 1
B.C. Baritone

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

f *mf* *p-f*

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407 Terrace
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Tuba
Bass Trombone

Jingle Bells

Russell Howland Collection

Allegretto

f *mf* *p-f*

opt. 8va basso

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Adopt a School

By Robert C. Snider, U. S. Navy Band, Washington, DC

How many times have you judged a solo/ensemble contest, attended an honors band or a school concert and thought, "With just a little help and coaching, that could have been a really terrific percussion section?"

Well instead of thinking about it, take some action! The Adopt A School program is to encourage you to offer your percussion expertise and assistance to a nearby school music program. Chances are, the local music teacher is not a percussionist and even if they are, they're often so involved with their entire ensemble, the percussion section probably doesn't reap the maximum benefits from their percussion experience. Contact that person, meet with them and find out what kind of help they want and need. Then, let them know what help you can give.

I'd recommend that you avoid becoming the part time drum instructor (unless that's what you really want). Instead, I'd suggest you offer to spend a few sessions at the school to help repair, adjust, tune up and organize the percussion area with the teacher and the percussion students in attendance, watching and learning what to do when you're not there.

I'd also suggest you offer to do several basic percussion techniques classes with the students and director so that performance techniques and tips can be shared. Put a lot of emphasis on section organization and the basic fundamental techniques and characteristic sounds of each instrument. Present the material in such a way so that they'll remember it tomorrow (unless you plan to spend many days at the school, anything more technical might be wasted effort). A worthy goal would be to make sure the director has the fundamental percussion knowledge to confidently make corrections and suggestions, from the podium, during rehearsals.

While touring around the country with various groups from the Navy Band, I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with many students and teachers during concert stops. Their questions and concerns always seem to fall into the following 4 categories:

1. Fixing, tuning and adjusting instruments
2. Fundamental performance techniques
3. Section organization and set up
4. Where to get more information

Over the years, I've developed an "off the cuff" mini clinic/workshop that would transfer well to an Adopt A school program. The following is a list of areas to trouble-shoot. Yes, a lot of this information may appear very basic to a percussionist, but I've found that these are the reoccurring fundamental concerns out there in the "trenches".

1. Fixing, adjusting and tuning instruments (Repair and Maintenance):

Organize a percussion first aid kit. Get a clothesbasket or bucket and assemble the following items:

1. Regular and Phillips screwdrivers
2. Various lengths and thickness' of nylon twine for snare strainers, triangle clips and keyboard bar/chime tube suspension.
3. Vaseline type lubricant for various lugs and screws
4. 1/4-inch wing nuts and tubing for cymbal stands
5. Various sizes of hose clamps for stands with striped holding screws
6. WD40 type spray lubricant
7. Fine sandpaper and paraffin wax or Teflon type tape for drum rims
8. Spray wax cleaner
10. Soft Scrub (a great chrome cleaner)
11. Regular and timpani drum keys (and a small adjustable pocket wrench for the odd sizes the keys won't fit)
12. Paper towels, rags and cloth towels
13. Black "Sharpie" type pen
14. Scissors, masking tape, needle-nose pliers, trash bag (for the storage closet and stick/instrument tray trash) and matches (to melt the ends of the nylon cord to prevent unraveling).

With this arsenal, you should be ready for almost any type of on site tune up or repair. Here are some of the more reoccurring repairs I've encountered:

Timpani:

The balance action pedal does not hold pitches and the drums won't reach the desired pitches! 99% of the time, just getting the heads back into range will solve these problems. Loosen any pedal pressure adjustments, hold the pedal heel down to the floor and tune the drums to the following fundamental pitches: 32" = D below the bass clef staff; 29" = F; 26 = Bb; 23" - D (octave above the 32").

When these pitches are achieved, and you've got the head in tune but the pedal still tends to ease forward (toe-down) release some of the tension by turning the tension control knob to the left. If the pedal tends to ease back (heel-down), add some tension by turning the control knob to the right. When you get it as balanced as you can, then use the pedal pressure adjustment (lightly) for some extra holding power. As a reminder to the students, I like to mark the approximate tuning ranges at the 12:00 position on each drumhead with a black "sharpie" (D-A; F-C; Bb-F; and D-A).

Squeaky heads with during pedal movement? Remove the head, clean the rim lightly with sandpaper, apply a little paraffin wax or add Teflon tape (replace or clean the head too...), add a touch of Vaseline to the lugs and replace the head on the drum.

Snare Drums:

Choked and muffled snare drums? For whatever reason (for lack of a drum key?), most school snare drums seem to rely on the internal tone control muffler to raise the tension of the batter head. And, most snare strainers are tightened to the max, with less than desirable results. So, loosen the internal tone control muffler, remove any cloth muffling strips, regrease the lugs and tune both heads to the desired setting. Next, set the snare tension adjustment screw to a halfway position of tightness and readjust the snare cord from BOTH sides of the drum. Adjust the snare tension as desired and finally, (if needed) tighten the internal tone control to just touch the head, taking out any unwanted high overtones

Tom Toms and Bass Drums:

Most of the time, I find these types of drums over tightened. Loosen the heads, regrease the lugs and tune them about one turn or so beyond "finger tightening". If the heads are in good shape, this should achieve a nice warm "boooooom". While you're at it, check out the bass drum stand for missing nuts and bolts and if needed, clean out any foreign objects that may have passed into the drum via the vent hole. With proper performance technique, cloth strips or artificial mufflers should not be needed.

Cymbals:

Make sure the cymbal stands have the necessary felt/rubber tube set up at the top of the stand. Cymbal straps usually are often wadded up are in need of replacement. A quick fix would be to soak the straps, let them dry flat and then retie onto the cymbals.

Keyboard Percussion:

Check for bent posts that are rubbing against bars and if needed, carefully straighten with pliers. Make sure all frame support struts are snugly fastened. Replace the bar or chime cord as needed.

Vibraphones:

- Lightly lube the resonator fan assembly with some WD-40.
- Adjust the damper bar so as to just touch and muffle the bars. If there are serious gaps, due to flattened felt under certain bars, either replace the entire felt, or remove the damper bar assembly and treat with some steam. This can often lift up the flattened part. Replace when dry and see if it makes a difference.

-Check the damper bar adjustment area and make sure the proper spring and disk or wing nut assembly is intact, if not replace with parts from your local hardware store or from the manufacturer.

Accessories:

- Be prepared to restring triangle clips, retie castanets and recommend replacement of cracked or broken instruments, sticks and mallets.
- Clean out and reorganize percussion cabinets or drawers, label these if needed.

School Drum Set:

Adjust the tuning of the drums as needed and check the set up for easy body movement around the drums. Have the student adjust the stool height so they can comfortably sit behind and play the snare drum and comfortably tap their feet. Then, while pretending to play the foot pedals, move the hi-hat and bass drum pedals to their established foot positions. Next, while they are in a snare drum playing position, gently push their elbows forward and place the high rack tom under the sticks. Now move their shoulders to the right and place the middle tom under the sticks, then bring their elbows back while moving their hands down to the floor tom and adjust drum height. Adjust the level of the toms so as to have a stick angle similar to the snare drum set up. Cymbals can set to slightly overlap the toms. The hi-hat height can be set to be about level with the high tom tom. The idea here is to get an easy flow around the set without having to do a lot of unnecessary reaching.

2. Fundamental performance techniques

As percussionists, we all have our own ways of teaching performance techniques and this article is not intended to be a rehash of a Percussion Techniques Course. But, I do want to point out some general concepts that we should constantly reinforce:

1. *Visualization and characteristics sounds of the instruments:*. I want my student percussionists to pretend they are working sound effects for a movie or TV show. When they play the castanets, then need to visualize wild Spanish dancers. When they play a march, they should visualize people marching in a parade, (you get the idea). When you do any fundamentals teaching, always stress visualization.
2. *Proper mallets and sticks:*
 - Snare drum sticks should be heavy enough to produce a full sound on the drum. I recommend a 2 or 5 B type stick and ask them to save the "A"s for the drum set.

-Keyboard mallets chosen by the student are very often too soft for the instrument. It's very frustrating to see a student work up a difficult xylophone part and then never hear them because of too soft a stick. Be sure to stress the proper type of mallet for each keyboard instrument. For most school band/orchestra playing, I'd recommend hard plastic for the xylophone, brass for bells, medium to hard yarn for vibes and medium hard rubber or yarn for marimba.

-I've never heard a conductor ask for "less chimes!" Chimes have a tendency to sound loud to the player, but that volume don't seem to carry out over the ensemble and into the audience. 99% of the time, I'll ask the student playing chimes to always play one dynamic louder than indicated.

3. *Playing spot*: Again, something we may take for granted, but it's something that needs to be reinforced. Remind the students to keep their snare drum sticks and timpani mallets close together in the same beating spot. Have the mallet players split the middle of the bar and also play on the very edge of the "black keys" and not over the string/node. Having students really *listen* to their sound should help correct this in a hurry.

4. I find that an unnatural playing position is one of the main hindrances to good percussion performance in a school setting. How we "address" an instrument makes a huge impact on how we will play and sound. An open stance will offer more mobility when we play timpani, concert toms or marimba. A snare drum or mallet instrument that is about belt high will keep our arms from stretching or compressing to reach the playing surface. Accessory instruments that are held up (when practical) in line with the music and the conductor are more fun to watch and sound better than when "hidden" behind a music stand.

When working with a group of school students, I'll have them pretend to play on an "air" marimba or snare drum. Chances are good that they will "place" that imaginary instrument at the proper height. If not, I'll ask them to drop their arms to their sides and then (while bending at the elbow) bring their forearms and hands up to almost parallel with the floor and move their hands up and down from the wrist. At this point I'll give them the appropriate sticks or mallets and bring the instrument to them and adjust it for their position. If the keyboard instrument is too low or if the drum stand will not go high enough, a quick and easy fix is to place the wheels or stand legs on wooden blocks.

I truly believe that if a student plays in a more natural position and takes the time to understand why they should adjust the instruments to fit their personal height, the techniques we teach (stick placement, stroke, touch) will be easier for the student to achieve.

3. Section organization and set up

Make sure each ensemble has a section manager to keep things organized. This does not have to be a senior and/or the hottest snare drummer in the band! This person simply needs to have a good sense of organization and diplomacy. Their job should be to make sure the section members have assigned parts and that they take care of their equipment.

I recommend setting up in 5 "work stations". Starting with the timpani (I) over by the low brass, I then have the bass drum and cymbals together (II), followed by the snare drum (III), then accessory percussion (IV) and keyboards (V). Each station has a music folder with a pencil inside. The parts in each folder have the folder number written in the upper left corner. This should help keep the same music in front of the same player everytime....if they follow the system.

Besides a stand for music, each "Station" should have it's own music stand for use as a stick or small instrument tray. A carpet square or towel should cover these flattened stands to cut down on placement noise. A towel-covered table should be near the accessory station for small instruments and if stands are not available for the pairs of crash cymbals, another covered table should be near the cymbals/ bass drum station. Never use a chair or the floor!

4. Where to get more information

I give the teacher several catalogues from different percussion manufactures and mail order companies. We all have our favorite method/etude books and videos. I compile mine on a sheet of paper I leave with the teacher. I try to pick books that cover the basics and are challenging but not overwhelming difficult. I also try to pick videos that are relevant and inspiring to school kids, and also entertaining. My book list will also include at least one repair book and a college type percussion techniques book . PAS samples and applications are also left at the school...

There is also a wonderful organization called the *Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation*, that is dedicated to promoting instrumental music education nationwide by partnering with businesses, schools, and communities to provide new and refurbished musical instruments to qualified schools and individual students. If you find yourself at a school that is in dire need of instruments or come across a student that cannot afford, but would greatly benefit from a donated instrument, check out their web site for more details: www.mhopus.org.

5. Where to get help

For you teachers that want some help, but are having trouble locating a local percussionist, check out the Percussive Arts Society web site, specifically <http://www.pas.org/Chapters/>. From there, click on "United States" and then the state of your choice. From there you should be able to contact your state chapter and get some leads on helpful PAS members in your area.

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to a Band Rehearsal #11

by M. Max McKee[Previous FUNNY](#)[Next FUNNY](#)

Helping a Friend

In the spring of 1971 I was in my 4th year of teaching at Southern Oregon University (then called Southern Oregon College). A student of mine, who was also my age and had arrived on campus the very day that I arrived in 1967, was about to graduate. Gary Wiese had also become a close personal friend during that time, so we always shared ideas and problems. In late May, Gary walked into my office with tears in his eyes and said, "I've tried and tried, but I just can't get a job as a band director.

By then most of the jobs were filled and Gary was getting nervous. So, I had him go to the college placement office and review his dossier to see if there were any problem letters. He did find a single negative comment that wasn't doing him any favors in getting interviews; he had the letter removed.

That same day, while he was so upset, I told Gary to rethink what he might need to do in the coming months and suggested that we return to school that Summer and Fall. The idea was to take a full slate of seminar credits so that he and I could meet 4 nights a week to work on special projects in band conducting. "Gary, this will help you develop a complete set of band director teaching tools while you wait for that inevitable opening when someone gets ill, pregnant or dies."

So, we did indeed start working: Listening to band literature, conducting band pieces, learning the overtone series (to master fingerings and pitch problems), marching band charting, tour planning and many other things. This went on throughout the summer and into mid-October when one day the phone rang and an administrator asked me if I knew anyone looking for a band job. Their director had committed suicide.

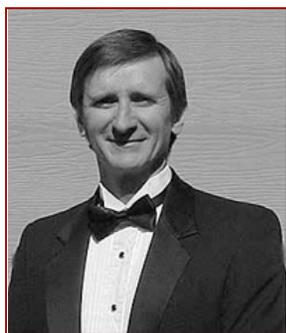
Gary immediately pulled up stakes and moved to Coquille, Oregon where he taught and had terrific middle school programs year after year until his retirement in 2002. The tools he had mastered served him well and little did I know at that time, but that action of having him study over 3 dozen areas of band directing would some 12 years later become the foundation of Band Director Prep and finally the American Band College master's degree program in 1992.

Meanwhile, Gary remains one of my closest friends and even serves on the adjudication faculty for oral exit exams with ABC master's candidates!

Next time: The Wind Ensemble craze.

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BW 2008
The Bandworld Legion of Honor

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John Combs

John Combs has been the Director of Bands at Hellgate High School of Missoula, Montana since 1981. He holds the BME from the University of Montana and the MME from the University of Southern California. Under his direction the Hellgate High School Bands have marched and performed in some of the most prestigious events in the United States including several performances in the Tournament of Roses Parade. John has held state offices in both the Montana Music Educators and the Montana Bandmasters Association.

John will tell you, "I've also been honored to work with Dr. David Maskanka... However, my biggest honor comes each time I give a downbeat to one of my bands. The dedication and desire they show with every performance is my ultimate encouragement and motivation. I'm honored to teach the wonderful young people Missoula lends me each year." He combines that attitude with an inescapable desire for excellence regardless of any situation.

A special award of

The John Philip Sousa Foundation

The Bandworld Legion of Honor was established in 1989 to honor, over the course of a year, eight of the finest band directors in our business.

Recipients have taught for at least fifteen years, have maintained a very high quality concert band program, and have contributed significantly to the profession through dedication to bands and band music.

Each is honored at the annual Sousa Foundation awards ceremony during the Midwest Band Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

Chairman of the Legion of Honor Committee is Terry Austin, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[Legion Laureates List Link](#)

[Terry Austin Bio](#)
[Legion of Honor Chairman](#)


Keith Jordan

For the last twenty-two years Keith Jordan has been the Director of bands at La Cueva High School of Albuquerque, New Mexico. He also serves there as a piano and math teacher. He holds both the undergraduate and graduate degrees from New Mexico State University. He made several teaching stops at various levels before settling in at La Cueva. He has served in many offices of the NMMEA and currently continues as the editor of New Mexico Musician Magazine.

When asked about the important influences in shaping his career Keith would point out the instilled work ethic of his parents and the influence of his band directors, Harold Van Winkle, Tim Lautzenheiser, Gregg Hansen and Sam Trimble.

Our school motto is, "Where excellence is a habit." My philosophy is based off that phrase, excellence in every facet of the music program we chose to participate in. Hard work is rewarded with personal growth and achievement. Don't toot your own horn, if you're doing a good job, somebody will play it for you. Don't ask anybody to do something that you can do yourself. Rome wasn't built in a day, pass me some cement and a rock, I've got work to do.