



Zephyrus Percussion

2021 Instructional Packet

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To: Perspective Zephyrus Percussion Candidates

From: David Hall and the Battery Percussion Staff at Zephyrus

Welcome to Zephyrus! We're excited to have this opportunity to work with you. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for you to expand your abilities, knowledge, skills and acumen.

Attached you will find our basic program and exercises. If you're getting this program in advance of our 2021 summer experience, please take some time to review the program and the exercises. We'll have a lot to do in a short amount of time.

We know that there are a lot of great teachers and programs out there. We're hoping that what we do here can act as a supplement to the things you already know and do, and make you better prepared for what you want to do next.

Looking forward to meeting

Dave Hall

The Basics: Caring for the Instrument

First and foremost, remember that this is a musical instrument. While we physically hit the instrument to produce sound, damage to the instrument can affect sound quality, availability, and lifespan. Please treat your instrument as such

1. Drum Tuning

- a. Preparing the instrument
 - i. Make sure the shell is clean and dry
 - ii. Feel the bearing edge of the shell (the area where the drum head touches the shell) for any imperfections
 - iii. Lightly sand any imperfections with light gage sandpaper
 - iv. Apply a light coating of paraffin, candle wax, or soap to the bearing edge. This will allow the head to move on the bearing edge. DO NOT USE VASELINE as it will attract dirt
 - v. All of the tension rods should have a light coating of Vaseline and at least on washer

2. Head Tuning

- a. Set the head in place and hand tighten the tension rods
- b. Seat the head by pressing down on the center of the head with the heel of your hand
- c. Tighten the head as follows:
 - i. Tighten each tension rod two full turns. Always move directly across the drum to the tension rod on the opposite side. Complete two full rotations
 - ii. At this point to you will begin to match tune. Continue to cross tune the head until the desired pitch is attained. Drums heads that are in tune with themselves produce superior sound quality

3. General Notes

- a. All drums should have a cover of some type to help reduce potential damage
- b. Keep your instrument dry. Moisture can damage or warp the shell. If you have to play in the rain, make sure your completely dry the instrument.

Style

Posture

We will coordinate with the visual program in all aspects. Movement is a critical aspect of the marching percussion activity, but remember that body control will lead to better playing and better overall presentation

Preparation

Remember that playing as a unit requires mental preparation. We need to listen to instructions, react quickly, endeavor to make corrections, and be ready for what is coming. Your attention to instruction, to directions and to detail is critical.

Grip Position

Both sticks should be gripped slightly behind the center of gravity. The gravity center can be found by balancing the stick on one finger until it is parallel to the ground. Approximately one inch behind that point is the position where you should grip the stick

Arm Position

The arms should be help in a naturally relaxed position. To check your arm position, put your arms down at your side and simply raise them into the playing position. A relaxed arm position will facilitate greater strength and flexibility and help in stroke production.

Stick Position

Snares – The correct position creates a 45 degree angle from the center of the body from each side, or a 90 angle from the front to the back of the sticks. There should be a slight 5-10 angle of attack from the bead of the stick to the back.

Tenors – Tenor angles vary based on the playing area of the drum you are utilizing. In general, it's important to keep the beads of the stick together in the playing area to produce uniform sound. A slightly higher angle of attack will assist in the smooth movement around the drums

Bass – An approximate 65 degree angle is naturally created from the bead through the wrist and down to the elbow. While there will be variations based on the characteristics of individual players, the correct angle is created by holding the stick at the proper angle in front of you and then turning them vertical.

The Grip

Right Hand

1. The stick is pinched between the thumb and the first finger between the first and second inside knuckle joint of the first finger
2. As you are pinching the stick there should be no space between the thumb and the remainder of the hand
3. The thumb should be on the top quarter of the stick
4. The back fingers wrap around the stick in a relaxed fashion. All fingers should remain on the stick
5. There is a slight outside turn to the back of the palm
6. The stick is an extension of the forearm. It is not help parallel with the arm, but on a slight angle

Traditional Left Hand

1. The hand is in a naturally curved position
2. The stick is gripped in the pocket between the thumb and first finger and rests on the third finger between the end of the finger and the first knuckle joint
3. The thumb should cross the stick and contact the bent index finger between the first and second knuckle joints. The thumb should be turned slightly upward. (it should not curl around) This connection creates the left hand fulcrum.
4. The third finger should be bent in order to make the area of stick rest as flat as possible.
5. The pinky should be tucked under the third finger in a relaxed position
6. The middle finger rests across the top of the stick in a relaxed position to help provide control

Basic Technique Checklist

1. Check your grip
2. Keep your beads together
3. Keep your fingers on the stick
4. Arms, elbows, and shoulders should remain in a relaxed position
5. The stick is an extension of the arm

Sound Production

Relaxation and the use of natural rebound are crucial to the production of a good quality sound. There are three muscle groups that are utilized; the arms, the wrists and the fingers. While the bead of the stick should always move first, the arm and the wrist work in combination to make that happen. The fingers used for control and definition. In general, the large muscles are the engine, and the smaller muscles are the guidance system.

Stroke Types

Legato

- Relaxed stroke
- The stick moves in consistently in a smooth motion
- No tight pressure points
- Utilize, control, and guide the natural rebound
- The most used stroke

Staccato

- Quicker stronger stroke
- The bead of the stick “stops” at the bottom of the stroke
- A stronger pinch at the fulcrum and finger control is required

Reminders

- There are other types of less common strokes that may be used or developed to achieve the desired musical effect
- The bead of the stick should always move first
- The use and control of the natural rebound needs to be developed
- Play into the drum head – without pounding
- Be aggressive in your approach. Big mistakes are fixable

Playing Heights and Zones

In order to achieve a uniform height of stick rise at any given dynamic level we need to have a common understanding and musical vocabulary.

Dynamic Level

Playing Height and Zone

pp	1 ½ inches either at the front, or side of the head
p	1 ½ inches at half way
mp	3 inches at center (tap height)
mf	6 inches (normal playing height)
f	9 inches (accent height)
ff	12 inches

Notes:

- This chart is like the “pirate code” – It’s a guideline
- A variety of playing zones can and will be utilized to assist in the creation of musical effects
- Dynamics are part of the music. When you are learning the music you must also learn the dynamics

Miscellaneous

- Practice is what you do to prepare for rehearsal. Please come prepared
- Please keep this program book, exercises, and all music with you at all times. A binder with plastic “pagekeepers” is a great way to stay ready
- Always bring a pencil to rehearsals. Changes happen all the time

We’re excited to have this opportunity to work with you to improve your approach and acumen.