THE PAS EDUCATORS' COMPANION

Volume 6
Spring 2019

A Helpful Resource of the
PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY
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PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY

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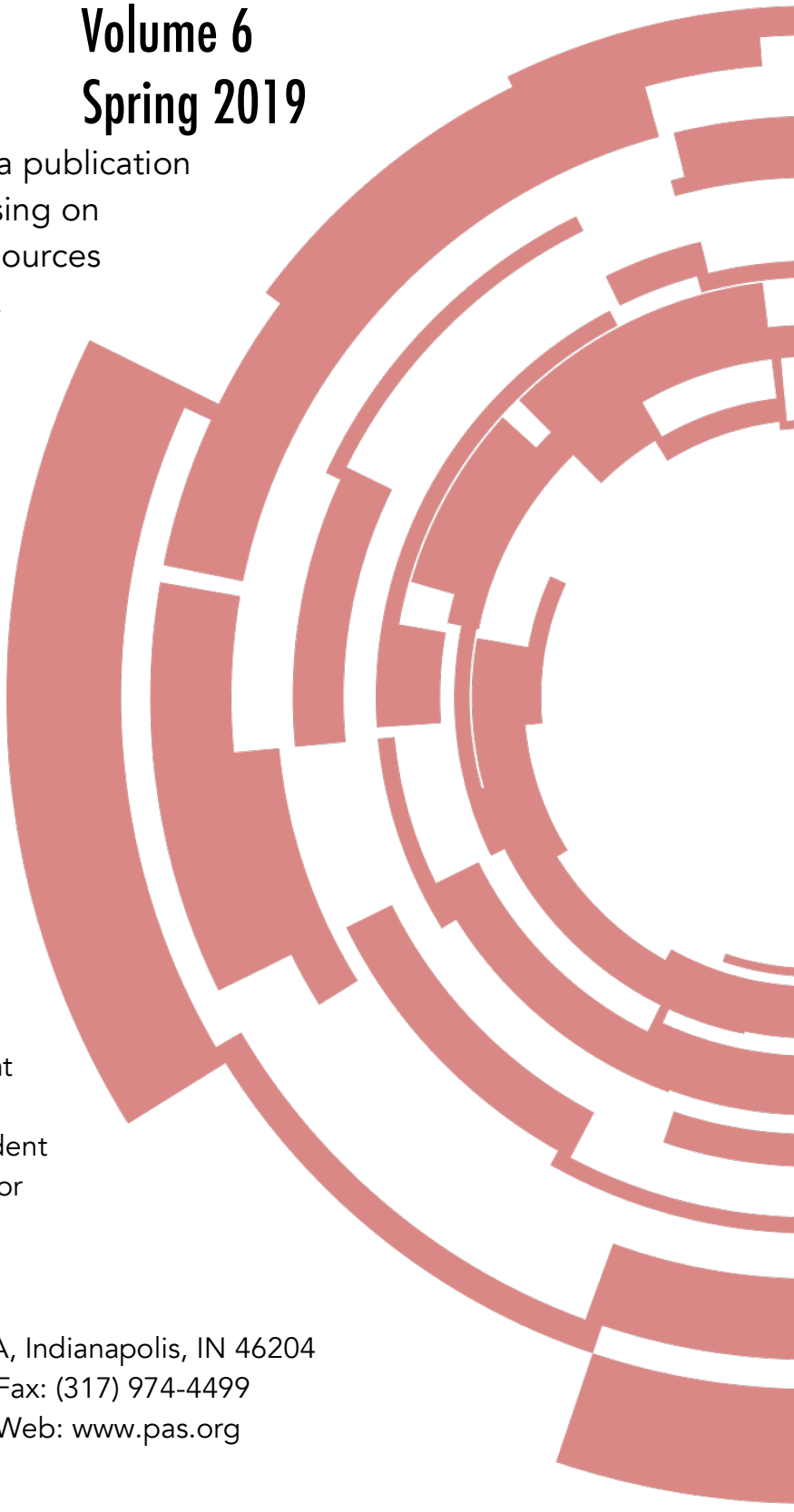
The PAS Educators' Companion is a publication of the Percussive Arts Society focusing on providing percussion education resources to the music education community.



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CONTACT PAS

110 W. Washington Street, Suite A, Indianapolis, IN 46204
Telephone: (317) 974-4488 Fax: (317) 974-4499
E-mail: percarts@pas.org Web: www.pas.org

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7 THINGS BAND DIRECTORS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TIMPANI 4
Karlyn Viña

ACCESSORY PERCUSSION FUNDAMENTALS: CRASH CYMBALS, PART ONE 8
Tommy Dobbs

SCAFFOLDING YOUR MARCHING BATTERY INSTRUCTION WITH SINGLE TENOR DRUMS 15
Jacob Beinborn

SELECTING BEGINNING PERCUSSIONISTS 18
Emily Tannert Patterson

CONCERT BASS DRUM FUNDAMENTALS 22
Joshua J. Knight

BUILDING BETTER PERCUSSIONISTS: A CURRICULUM TO ADVANCE YOUR PERCUSSION SECTION MUSICALLY AND TECHNICALLY YEAR BY YEAR: PART TWO 26
Scott Farkas

7 THINGS BAND DIRECTORS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TIMPANI

Karlyn Viña

Over the years, I've found that many non-percussionist middle school and high school band directors feel like they just don't know enough about timpani. I know that in the whirlwind semester of percussion methods, a lot of details can be lost between triple paradiddles and which mallets to use on glockenspiel. I always tell my percussion methods students that they don't need to memorize EVERYTHING about percussion, but that they do need to know the basics, and know where to look or who to call for everything else. This list isn't meant to be all-inclusive, but is a good start for those who want to know more!

1. Sizes

The sizes of the drums are important to know, not just when ordering replacement heads (although this is important too!), but because individual timpani are often referred to by their diameter in inches (i.e. "for the concert, we'll only need the 29" and 26," or "tune an 'A' on the 29").

Most middle school and high school band programs have 4 timpani, sized at 32", 29", 26", and 23" (less common sizes in school programs are 30", 28", 25", 22"). Advanced programs and colleges will typically have 5 timpani, adding a 20" drum to the set.

*When it is time to order replacement heads, make sure that you consult the charts published online by manufacturers such as Remo and Evans. Timpani heads are actually larger than the bowls, and the specific head size needed for each drum can vary between models. If in doubt, always double-check by calling either a trusted percussionist or a company's customer service!

2. Ranges

Band directors should know the ranges of the drums so they can help students with tuning schemes (knowing on which drum to tune each required pitch in a piece), and also so they can

check to make sure that the drums stay in the correct ranges so that all necessary pitches can be reached. All of the ranges that I teach students span a perfect fifth of notes that you should always be able to count on sounding good on each timpano. Each drum should also reach at least a little higher and a little lower than the given range - maybe even up to an octave - but these are the pitches that you should always be able to tune on each drum:

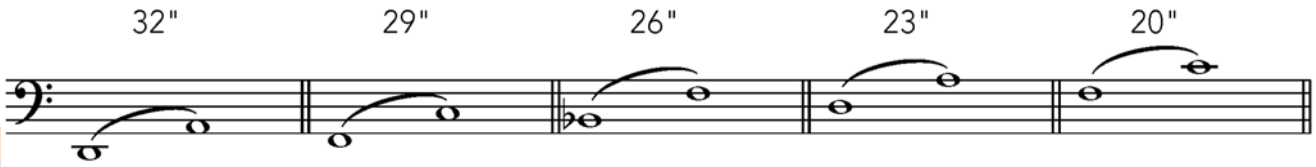
32": D2 - A2

29": F2 - C3

26": B-flat2 - F3

23": D3 - A3

20": F3 - C4



*If you are a non-percussionist band director and you discover that one or more of your school's timpani are out of range, this is an example of a time I might recommend calling a professional percussionist to adjust the drums (and if you do this, ask them if you can observe and if they can explain the process!). There are also many excellent online resources to learn to make the adjustments yourself.

3. Grip and Stroke

Two of the most common timpani grips are French grip (thumbs facing up, palms facing in) and German grip (backs of hands facing up, palms facing down). As a performer, I use both, depending on the musical situation, but as a private teacher, I always start students on timpani with French grip. This is because one of the most important characteristics of a general timpani stroke is **lift**, or returning the mallet to the starting position immediately after attacking the head. The immediate lift results in a less "thwacky" sound and more pleasant and characteristic timpani tone. I introduce students to French grip on timpani first because I conceptualize that with less flesh on top of the stick (thumbs only), lifting comes more naturally. Ultimately, I find that developing and reinforcing good habits in grip and stroke is best achieved with consistent, mindful practice and the guidance of a private teacher.

4. Beating Spots

As a general rule for beating spots, I tell students to play in from the rim about 1/3 of the radius of the drum. This means that the beating spot is relative to the drum size. In practice, timpanists adjust their beating spots based on desired sound - moving a bit closer to the center will darken the tone, while moving closer to the rim will create a brighter tone. In the beginning, students tend to have inconsistent beating spots, and especially tend to play too far toward the center on the 23" drum, so it's important to correct and reinforce good beating spots in students' playing. Certain contemporary pieces do call for other beating spots, such as the center of the drum, as an effect.

5. Protecting the Timpani

Just like most of the rest of the percussion instruments in a band room, the timpani should always be covered by half or full drop covers when not in use. The covers can protect the instruments from accidental damage, but just as importantly, keeping the instruments covered shows that they are cared for and not to be played or touched (or worse) by anyone walking by!

It's also best to attach a sign on top of the timpani covers that says nothing should be placed on top of the timpani, ever. Having others treat the instruments as a table is a pet peeve for many percussionists. It's just best, especially in an educational setting, to insist that nothing is placed on top of the timpani.

6. How to Move Timpani

First, the pedals should always be set in the highest position before moving the timpani. This increases the tension on the head, which decreases the chance of misaligning the head during moving.

Second, the drums should always be moved (pushed or pulled) by the struts, NOT the counterhoop. Again, this will keep the tuning and alignment of the head more intact. Many school timpani have only two wheels, with no wheel under the pedal. On these timpani, either an attachable wheel should be placed under the pedal if one is available, or the pedal must be lifted while rolling the drum. This is a bit awkward whether you walk forward or backward, and whichever way the timpani are tilted (sometimes I call this the "duck walk" with students), but lifting the pedal by the struts is necessary. Timpani should always be handled with care and lifted whenever possible over cracks, bumps, or door thresholds.

7. Protecting Timpani Mallets (and Bass Drum Beaters, too!)

Whether a school band program provides sticks and mallets, or requires students to purchase their own, it's important that students know how to care for felt mallets (in many programs,

felt timpani and bass drum mallets are destroyed annually!). First, felt mallet heads should be touched as little as possible. I find that idle percussion students holding mallets during rehearsal tend to touch, rub, and pull at felt mallets to no end! This gets dirt and oil on the mallet and causes the mallet to wear out faster. Felt timpani mallet heads and bass drum beaters shouldn't be touched by anything except when they hit the drum head! Mallets should also always be stored in a plastic bag, either in the original bag, or in a small sandwich bag that is twisted between the mallet heads.

Praised by the South Florida Classical Review for her "dazzling" and "incisive" performance, **Dr. Karlyn Viña** is a dynamic and creative percussionist based in Miami, FL. As a performer, Karlyn has a passion for solo, chamber, and orchestral music, with a particular interest in contemporary music. Karlyn has an active freelance career in South Florida, performing regularly with the Palm Beach Symphony and Florida Grand Opera.

Dr. Viña serves on the faculty of Florida International University, Miami Music Project, Westminster Christian School, Ransom Everglades School, Florida Christian School, and South Florida Youth Symphony. Additionally, she maintains a busy private studio in Miami, teaching concert percussion, keyboard percussion, timpani, and drum set.

Karlyn earned her Doctorate of Musical Arts in Percussion Performance from the University of Miami as a fellow of the Henry Mancini Institute. Her dissertation focuses on the performance of works for theatrical percussion. She also holds degrees in Percussion Performance and Music Education from The Boston Conservatory and the University of Maryland.

ACCESSORY PERCUSSION FUNDAMENTALS: CRASH CYMBALS, PART ONE

Tommy Dobbs
Photography assistance by Darci Wright

The following information marks the beginning of a series of articles on the main accessory percussion instruments commonly found in band and orchestral literature: cymbals, tambourine, and triangle. As we move further into the 21st century, percussionists continue to explore various pedagogical approaches to these instruments as seen with the creation of - *Complementary Percussion* by Keith Aleo and *Percussion Accessories* by Todd Meehan (Liquidrum). While these resources make for a wonderful addition to one's library, this publication series is aimed at fundamental sound production and should be seen as a reference in creating appropriate and consistent sounds on each instrument.

Tying Crash Cymbal Straps

Tying straps can often leave a person frustrated and, if done incorrectly, with a lethal projectile during their next rehearsal. Having personally seen the latter during a recent junior high rehearsal, I thought it necessary to discuss my method for tying cymbal straps.

First, take both leather straps and reverse them so that the coarse or unfinished leather hide is on the inside of the player's hand. I do this because most percussionists' hands sweat during performance and sweat plus smooth leather can sometimes lead to the previously mentioned projectile incident.

Second, take one strap and group the four split-ends together in preparation for forcing them through the opening in the dome. Then, pull the split-ends through the opening on the dome until they are evenly spaced on the inside of the cymbal. The player's side should looks like the image below.

Lay the four straps separately against the inside of the cymbal, making a large plus sign (+).

Third, we must interlace these straps together to create a tight and secure knot. Take one of the arms of our newly formed plus sign and fold it on top of the one immediately to the right or left. This should create a small "t."

Now take the arm underneath the folded one and fold it over the next arm to the left or right.

You should have the two T-shaped folds with two extended arms remaining. Now complete the last two folds until all four arms have been folded and tucked.

At this stage having a friend could save you time, but is not necessary. (Side note: friends are awesome.) Option 1: The Friendless Way. To complete the tying, pull on two adjacent arms creating one half of the final knot and then repeat the process with the other two arms. This cycle continues until the strap is secure, pulling on the outside loop and keeping the knot in place underneath the dome. Option 2: With A Friend. In a similar fashion, have your friend pull two adjacent straps while you pull the other two. Continue until the strap is secure.

The Grip

The key to producing consistent sounds on any instrument is control. I begin by holding the strap the same way as I would when creating a fulcrum with a snare drum stick. I hold the strap between the thumb and the first joint of the index finger using this imagery: if you were to put a needle through your thumbnail, it would go through the nail, through the strap, and into the first joint of the index finger.

Please note: some players position themselves so that the dome of the cymbal is laying against the side of the thumb, but I find that I have more control over the instrument (less wiggle room) if the nail is facing into the dome.

Crashing

There are over a dozen ways to crash cymbals, all of which are appropriate, and there is no substitute for consulting recordings by the world's top performers, such as Frank Epstein (Boston Symphony Orchestra), Cynthia Yeh or Patsy Dash (Chicago Symphony Orchestra), and Chris Lamb (New York Philharmonic). For this series, I will focus on three distinct cymbal crashes that I have found to be the most common in our repertoire: cadential, repeaters, and soft crashes. Before I dive into these three specifically, in this article let's discuss the mechanics in creating one isolated crash.

The goal is to replicate the motion of a flam so that the soon-to-be-trapped air between the two cymbals can escape. Please note that the flam will not be heard as a literal flam when the velocity of the impact increases. The sound will in fact be a "crash."

Now that we know what to listen for, let's create a flam. First, the grip must be matched in both hands, keeping the cymbals parallel to your body and perpendicular to the floor. Then pull the cymbals a few inches away from your body to leave room for the crash motion to occur.

Second, we leave your non-dominant hand stationary and angle your dominant hand 35-45 degrees away from the other. Place the tip of this angle about 1-2 inches down the inside of the non-dominant cymbal to give room for shifting during impact.

Third, leave the non-dominant hand stationary and move the other about 5-7 inches, horizontally, away from the other. Making sure to keep the angle and the dominant hand approximately 1-2 inches down the inside of the other cymbal.

You can now crash the dominant cymbal hand into the other. Think about performing this act as you would if you were a monkey alarm clock cymbal player. I'm sure you have seen one of these. The only differences are that one cymbal is angled and you are only crashing once. Also, try to avoid the "slicing up or down" motion after crashing. You have you commit to this crash and see it all the way through. We termed it "crash cymbals" and not "light, slicing cymbals" for a reason. A crash is a violent affair and the only way for a true mezzo forte or forte sound to occur. It is a bit jarring at first, but after a few dozen attempts you will find the right about of force needed for you and your students.

To better assist you as you practice, please note these additional concepts:

- Relax your fingers right after you crash.
- Keep the flam angle.
- Use a mirror.
- Have a relaxed but grounded stance.
- Larger cymbals will need a wider angle.
- Wear ear plugs and practice in a large space.

Dr. Tommy Dobbs is the Instructor of Percussion at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith. An active educator, he holds positions with the Percussive Arts Society as both a member of the Percussion Pedagogy Committee and as the Treasure for the Arkansas Chapter of PAS. Dr. Dobbs completed his Doctorate and Master's Degrees in Percussion Performance from the Florida State University and his Bachelor's Degree in Percussion Performance from the University of North Florida. He is a proud endorser of SABIAN cymbals, Innovative Percussion Inc., and Grover Pro Percussion.

SCAFFOLDING YOUR MARCHING BATTERY INSTRUCTION WITH SINGLE TENOR DRUMS

Jacob Beinborn

Single marching drums are not a new idea in the marching percussion ensemble, and are very much a precursor to the modern "multi-tenor" instrument in the contemporary battery. That is not to say that there are not variants of the tenor drum still in practice: single tenors are still found in Scottish pipe bands as well as HBCU show-style bands (in the form of sling tenors and chest mounted tenors), duo-tenors and timbales found with groups such as the Ohio University Marching 110 (Athens, OH), and even tri-toms can still be found. A more contemporary variant has emerged in the world of "corps-style" marching percussion, in both the marching band activity and the indoor percussion activity.

This variant is the single marching tenor that I will be focusing on. This instrument shows up in slightly different designs and names, but generally present for the same educational purpose.

When our percussion ensemble began to make use of these single drums, our staff also decided to consider the name. Most of our instructional staff knew of this instrument under the name "flub drums", but being that the word flub is synonymous with blunder, we wanted to explore alternative naming conventions. When considering the role of the instrument in our ensemble, we settled on the name "Impact Tenors".

For the sake of discussing alternate names, we defined this instrument in our ensemble as a single large marching tenor drum, and ours are the same as the drum four on many marching tenor sets (that is the largest drum on the multi-tenors, generally 13-14 inches). We have not ruled out adding a shot drum to the side, or accessory sounds such as ribbon crashers and other lightweight mountable percussion instruments. Many ensembles that use impact tenors do have additional accessory instruments mounted, and I imagine as the instrument evolves in our ensemble, that it will head this direction.

While our ensemble uses the name "Impact Tenors" (and I will use this name through the article), many ensembles that use this voice in their instrumentation will refer to it under

different names, including but not limited to: flubs, double tenors, pod drums, impact tenors, and marching tom.

We wanted to grow the size and technique of our battery ensemble, and noticed the skills that some students were lacking to help them be successful on our current battery instruments in a marching show were not necessarily skills that would be developed through a season of front ensemble performing. An example of this from a recent audition was a student that played on par with the other younger members of the ensemble, but his hand-foot coordination needed work, as musical complexity beyond basic exercises caused his hands to fall apart when the foot timing would be added. This was not something that would be best fixed through a season on a front ensemble instrument. Too often we look at the current season's projected success for the placement of a student through auditions, and not at the long-term plan and path for the student (where are they headed and what will get them there). In this case he was passionate about being on the battery, and will be an excellent leader of the battery in his later years of high school, it was logical to scaffold his marching percussion skills much like we do any other musical skill.

We decided to use our impact tenors as a stepping-stone to many of the other battery instruments for the students that needed it. In its current iteration in our ensemble it has only one drum for the student to worry about, and is lightweight for marching. Compositionally, I write the music for it as a hybrid of the other battery instruments. It is common for the impact tenor to play skeleton rhythms of the snare and tenor parts (not always, sometimes we want a pure snare voice or a pure tenor voice), as well as the ensemble impact rhythms played by unison bass line parts, and in some phrases the exact same rhythm as the snares and tenors (if they are in unison). By skeleton rhythms, I am referring to the overarching rhythm stripped of the ornamentation (such as rolls, flams, harder stickings). Educationally this is to give them a much more skill-appropriate part for where they are at, especially in coordination with the movement demands. Their parts do not have to be completely devoid of rudimental content; in some phrases you can also have flams and the like present, however use your judgment when composing and arranging their parts to make sure that it is appropriate for the skill of the player. We have also added to their parts mid-season to increase the difficulty as appropriate. In the case of the student described earlier, it has allowed him to develop the coordination of his hand and foot timing with an easier part, while still being part of the battery ensemble, and while still allowing for the other sections to have skill-appropriate music to challenge and help them grow.

We try to use our funding wisely in our program, making investments that will last for many years when properly maintained, as well as to make use of the equipment we already had. While it is possible to purchase these instruments ready made from some percussion stores and companies, many ensembles currently own the equipment to introduce this instrument into their ensembles. It was a trend for many years to use single tenor drums as trophies at

sponsored marching band competitions, and as luck would have it, we had a few that were 14 inches, and in pristine condition from being stored in a trophy case, as well as a set of old tenors stored away that no longer matched our current drums. For hardware, we have used some old carriers, and some complementary hardware to mount them. In our case, we had an old Randall-May tenor back rail that we cut to size to mount the j-bar receivers to, and attached the impact tenor to that rail as if it were a shot drum. I have also seen many other clean and effective designs that either have been custom made or pieced together from other old hardware in the band room, including attaching j bar receivers directly to the drum shell. Our current drums are a black wood grain design; with some searching I was able to find black wood grain contact paper to allow the drums to match visually. Because our drums were from old trophy drums, they are an angle cut, as found on almost all multi-tenors, however it is also common to find impact tenors that are flat-cut, that is, the bottom cut of the shell runs parallel with the ground (much like timbale drums). With a bit of creative repurposing, you could potentially add these drums to your ensemble with parts and pieces that have been collecting dust in the forgotten corners of your band room storage. Many band parent organizations have members that would eagerly take on a DIY project like this, however I do advise you and your percussion instructor to be involved in the planning for this project.

Impact tenor with modified back rail and j-bar receivers

With a bit of work and preparation this instrument could be a cheap and straightforward way to grow your marching percussion ensemble in size and ability, and help prepare your students for more advanced marching percussion parts earlier in their school education.

Jacob Beinborn is a graduate of Illinois State University, with his bachelor's degree in instrumental music education. Currently, he is an early childhood elementary music teacher in Mahomet, Illinois. He is also the director of percussion for the Bloomington High School marching band and indoor percussion ensemble, as well as a marching percussion composer and arranger for several midwestern schools.

SELECTING BEGINNING PERCUSSIONISTS

Emily Tannert Patterson

One of the most important elements in ensuring success for beginning instrumentalists is helping students select instruments for which they are well suited. Just as students with a teardrop lip formation are not well suited for flute, or students with large lip structure are not well suited for high brass, a student who has difficulty displaying and subdividing pulse without instruction is not well suited for percussion.

In my school district, we test all students on "small pieces" (headjoints, mouthpieces, etc.) to help them select instruments they're interested in and well suited for. These instrument drives take place during the spring of a student's 5th grade year. Holding them enables us to correctly balance and schedule our beginner classes, and allows students and parents ample time to secure instruments and supplies prior to the school year starting. Students can indicate which instruments they are interested in trying out and are encouraged to have an open mind. For certain instruments, primarily percussion, double reeds, and low brass, we are very clear that there are limits on the number of students we can take, and that students must "test into" the class. For admission into the Beginning Percussion class, the skill set I am looking for is:

- ability to keep steady time
- ability to subdivide pulse without instruction
- ability to mimic basic snare drum skills (grip, stroke, and sticking patterns) with minimal instruction

TESTING PROCESS

Phase 1: Tap and clap
Supplies: metronome and chair
Student is seated with feet flat on the floor; tester sits opposite student. Metronome is set to 80 bpm.
Procedure:

a. Ask the student to tap their foot to the beat. Then ask them to clap in between the foot-taps. What's important is what you DON'T say - don't say things like "right" or

"exactly" or "in the middle" - just say "in between the foot taps." You'll be amazed at the students who are able to give you perfect subdivision with no additional instruction—and that's what you're looking for. Some students' eyes will get really big and they won't understand what you mean; in these cases I demonstrate, but no more than 3-4 beats. The goal is for them to show that they already understand and can execute steady beat with subdivision without instruction.

b. Once they successfully have (a), I'll ask them to flip it - meaning, clap on the beat and tap in between.
c. Waltz - change the metronome to 60 bpm and ask them to clap twice in between the foot taps. You're looking for a triplet "tap - clap - clap." Most students don't get this, so I demonstrate 1-2 beats and see if they can then do it. If I'm backed up I don't even bother with this one if they can do the first two.

If the student can't do (a) pretty readily, after a little coaching, I usually don't move on. A lot of times the students will say, "that's hard!" and I'll say, "yeah, it is, but unfortunately it's just the FIRST thing you have to be able to do to make it into the percussion class, so maybe percussion isn't such a good choice for you. What other instruments are you interested in?" or I'll say, "that's pretty hard, huh?" and when they agree, give them that line.

Phase 2: "Monkey see, monkey do"
Supplies: pad or drum; two pairs of concert sticks
Procedure:

a. Hand the student a pair of sticks; you then pick up sticks and tell them, "make your hands look like mine." Don't correct any flaws - the goal is to see if they can mimic you with no instruction (that's the "monkey see, monkey do" part!).
b. Have the metronome going at 80, but don't say anything about it.
c. You play and they play back to you, in quarter notes: RLRL; RRLL; RLRR; LRLL.

What you want to see is if they're able to mimic your motion (from the wrist, start up/end up, and sticking changes). Some students will mirror your sticking rather than mimicking, and that's okay. What you want to see is if the student stays with the metronome naturally and is able to mostly follow the sticking changes. If the student's grip or stroke is completely wrong (caveman thumb or pointed index), or is super arm stroke or down stroking, I'll fix it and see how well they respond to instruction/maintain corrections.

SCORING

We use a 1-10 scale to rate students. I generally only rate students a 9 or 10 if they perform all items perfectly or near perfectly. 90% of what I look for is the student's timing, and hope for their hands to work well. I rarely admit students with a rating below 7 to the class, and I generally try not to give ratings of 4-6; either a student has pulse, mostly has pulse, or doesn't have pulse.

SETUP

A nice facet of this test is that it requires minimal equipment and can be set up just about anywhere. It is, however, important that students are not able to preview the test by watching other students test. Ideally, the test will take place inside a separate room, and students will wait outside the door. If this is not possible, try to do the test as far away from the line of waiting students as possible. I sometimes have parents ask if twins/siblings can test together and the answer is no, they have to go one at a time.

STUDENT/PARENT REACTION

There will always be parents who are upset when their students don't get in and are disappointed, so what I explain is that the screening tests for steady beat and subdivision, both of which are prerequisites for Beginning Percussion and which are taught in Elementary Music. I explain that I totally understand that students are disappointed, and that as a parent it is really hard to watch your student want something so badly and not get it. At the same time, this small disappointment is nothing compared to having a student struggle day in and day out to keep up with the pace of a very demanding class and lose their love of making music as a result. I explain that what we want most of all is for students to play instruments they're well suited for so that they're able to experience some success right away and enjoy their music-making experience, and if that means they end up on a different instrument than what they originally wanted, that's okay because they're still making music! Some parents ask if their student can get some outside instruction and try again next year; I tell them they're welcome to audition again in the future but that there is no guarantee that the scheduling will work out or that they'll get into the class. I also mention that if they are dead set on percussion, they may want to explore outside instruction where they can learn at their own pace and just enjoy what they're doing. And last but not least - I always tell parents that I'll be happy to set up an appointment and re-test their child with them present.

The end result of this process is a beginner class that is much more evenly matched in terms of ability to keep, understand, and subdivide time, which helps with pacing of the class, reduces the need to remediate in the later grades, and all of which leads to greater retention of and success for students in the long run.

Emily Tannert Patterson is the percussion director at Rouse High School and Wiley Middle School, Leander, TX. Her ensembles have garnered numerous accolades including the 2016 PAS Int'l Percussion Ensemble Contest winner (Middle School division), second place in the 2015 Black Swamp Percussion Ensemble Contest, the 2015 WGI Houston Regional Scholastic Concert World championship, and the 2014 TCGC Scholastic Concert Open championship. Patterson is also active as a percussion arranger, having written for drumlines and concert WGI ensembles in Texas, Michigan, Ohio, and elsewhere.

Patterson holds a Master's degree in Percussion Performance from The University of Texas at Austin, where she studied with Thomas Burritt and Tony Edwards. Patterson earned her Bachelor's degree in Instrumental Music Studies, along with an undergraduate Performance Certificate in Percussion and her Texas teaching certificate,

from UT in 2008, and received her Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Political Science from Northwestern University in 2004.

Patterson marched with the Glassmen Drum and Bugle Corps in 2003 and was a member of the 2004 Winter Guard International world champion indoor drumline Music City Mystique. She has been active as a percussion judge for the Texas Color Guard Circuit, Texas Educational Colorguard Association, and North Texas Colorguard Association since 2011.

Patterson is an educational endorser for Innovative Percussion sticks and mallets and Remo drumheads, and holds professional memberships in the Texas Music Educators Association, the National Association for Music Education (MENC), and the Percussive Arts Society, and is a member of the Texas Color Guard Circuit Percussion Advisory Task Force.

CONCERT BASS DRUM FUNDAMENTALS

Joshua J. Knight

Mallets - Mallet selection is essential to creating the perfect bass drum sound for every musical moment. Generally, the available mallets should include: 1. General, 2. Large/Heavy, 3. Staccato, 4. Rollers. A wide range of mallet sizes and weights, as well softness and hardness are available from various manufacturers and are clearly labeled and described in most catalogs.

Grip – The mallet grip has much to do with how the instrument sounds as well as the ease with which rhythms are executed. This grip is identical to the grip used for legato/rebound strokes on a snare drum; a relatively loose grip incorporating all of the fingers, thumb on the side, that allows the mallet to rebound off of the drum head in a natural way. *see images below.

Set-up - The performer should be situated behind, not beside, the bass drum. This position will allow the performer to reach both the front and back heads for dampening. A good visual reference for correct placement is the performer's feet. Place the left foot just between the two casters, or legs, on the bass drum stand. This position will also naturally place the mallet parallel to the drum head, allowing for the most optimal point on the mallet head to contact the drum head. *see images below.

Stroke - The stroke predominantly used is the legato/rebound stroke. This loose and natural stroke motion will create a full and consistent tone. Stroke motions should generally connect to one another. This continuous movement will not only get the large mallet head away from the drum so that it can vibrate freely, but also create physical repetition that will aid in executing accurate and even rhythms.

Tone - Various timbres are possible on the bass drum. The range of possible timbres can easily be explored by simply playing very near the rim, then slowly working your way to the center of the drum.

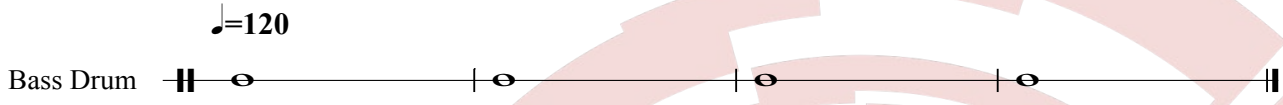
Playing Areas - After experimenting with tone production, the relationship to various playing areas on the head becomes clear. Here are the basic playing areas used to create standard tones required in band and orchestra literature. See images below.

1. Center 2. Off-Center 3. Edge 4. Rolls

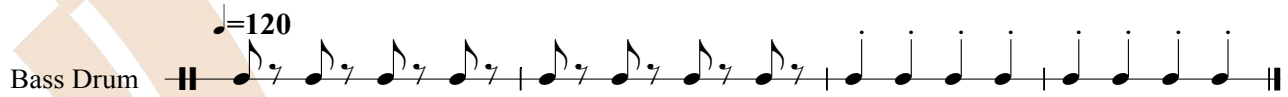
Muffling – The bass drum should *only* be muffled if a rest is indicated, note length in the ensemble or style of repertoire requires it, or if the conductor asks for it. For example, the style of a Sousa march may require the performer to muffle the drum in the rests, rather than while striking the drum, so that the tones are full but articulate. Muffling can be accomplished a number of ways, from the use of the knee, hand, arm, etc., but it is most easily accomplished with the hand in an open position, utilizing the palm, fingers, and thumb (see third image below). Furthermore, holding a soft object in the hand, such as a towel, will prevent any unwanted sounds that result from bare skin vibrating on the drum head.

Rolls - Because of the angle of the bass drum, the use of a traditional left hand grip makes rolls easier; matched grip can be used, however, and will produce the same results as long as the performer maintains the appropriate mallet angle in relation to the drum head. Rolls should be executed as even single-strokes with the RH and LH placed at specific spots, generally the 12:00 and 6:00 positions. Softer dynamic rolls should be played closer to the edge (approximately 5 inches from the hoop), and louder dynamics slightly further toward the center. If playing a crescendo or decrescendo, gradually move from one playing area to the other. See fourth image below for *pp* to *mf* rolls.

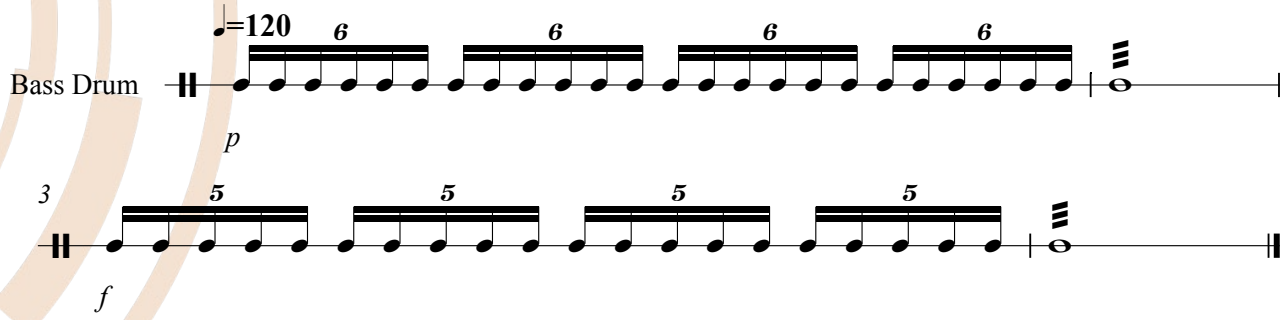
Ex. 1 – Full/Long Tones: Off-center playing spot, full legato stroke, continuous motion connecting attacks.



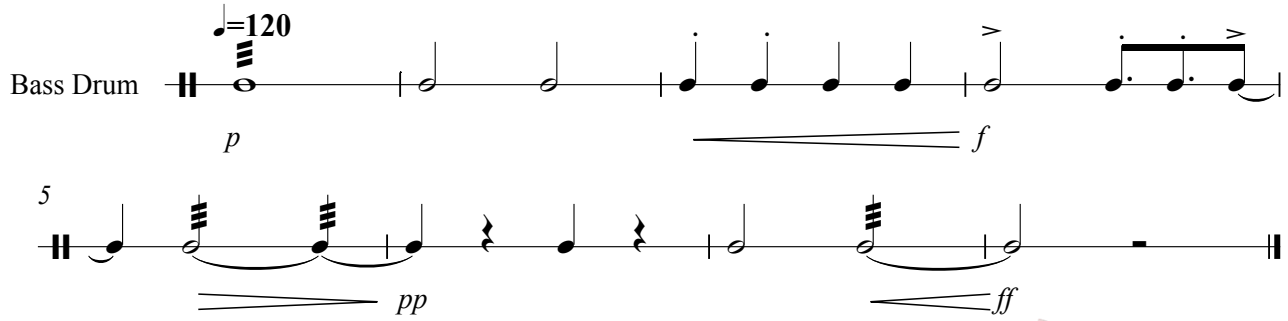
Ex. 2 – Full/Muffled Notes(marches): Off-center playing spot, legato stroke with more grip pressure, muffling with left hand. *All four measures below are executed the same. Measures 1-2 exhibit the timing of the left hand muffling.



Ex. 3 – Rolls: Use playing areas 5 inches from the hoop, at 12:00 and 6:00 positions. Move slightly closer to the center at loud dynamic. * The first and third measures represent a notated roll, and should be the approximate sing-stroke speed of the preceding rolls.



Ex. 4 – Combining Techniques: A combination of techniques should be used to execute the following material. Soft rolls, muffled quarter notes, full notes at various dynamics, decrescendo/ crescendo rolls, and muffling in rests.



Dr. Joshua J. Knight is Assistant Professor of Percussion at Missouri Western State University. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma, and earned his Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees from the University of Central Arkansas. His teachers include Lance Drege, Blake Tyson, Thomas Burritt, and Benjamin Finley.

Knight has presented and performed at regional and international events such as the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, Texas Music Educators Association conference, College Music Society regional conference, and numerous state percussion festivals including the Arkansas Day of Percussion, Oklahoma Day of Percussion, and University of Central Arkansas Percussion Festival. As an active performer and clinician Knight has appeared at numerous high schools and universities throughout

the United Sates, and has performed with the Abilene Philharmonic, Fort Smith Symphony, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Lawton Philharmonic, Pine Bluff Symphony, and Conway Symphony orchestras. Knight is also active in commissioning new works for percussion that include *Inside The Shining Stone* by Blake Tyson, published by blaketysonmusic : *Shattered* by Cody Criswell, published by C-Alan Publications, *Halcyon Days* by Nathan Daughtrey, published by CAlan Publications and most recently, *The Wind That Turns The World* by Blake Tyson, published by blaketysonmusic. Knight's article "Trends and Developments Through Thirty Prominent Snare Drum Method Books" is a featured cover story in *Percussive Notes*, the official research journal of the Percussive Arts Society. Additionally, he serves on the Education Committee and Ed Companion Subcommittee for PAS. Among the numerous awards and honors received throughout his career, the most current include the Ronald Dyer award for excellence in the area of percussion awarded by the University of Oklahoma in 2008 and participation in the semi-final round of the Southern California International Marimba Competition in 2009. Knight is a member of the Percussive Arts Society, College Music Society, TMEA, MMEA, and is an artist endorser for Vic Firth sticks and mallets and Yamaha percussion instruments. For more information about Dr. Knight please visit www.knightpercussion.com , or email joshknight2@gmail.com.

BUILDING BETTER PERCUSSIONISTS: A CURRICULUM TO ADVANCE YOUR PERCUSSION SECTION MUSICALLY AND TECHNICALLY YEAR BY YEAR: PART TWO

Scott Farkas

PREFACE

In my time as a percussion specialist in public school programs, a private lesson teacher, and as a member of the music faculty at the College of Southern Idaho, I have found that it can be difficult to organize an approach to the vast array of instruments, skills and techniques that it is necessary for student percussionists to master. In this series of articles, I will put forward an idea of curricular programming from year 1 of a percussionist's involvement with a school band program through graduation. The concept of this program of study is to organize the percussion education curriculum in a way that focuses deliberately on a small group of techniques at any one time. By focusing on technique first, and then picking music that reinforces the that focus, this curriculum will produce percussionists who:

- know all of the standard rudiments before high school and all of the modern hybrid rudiments before college
- master all of their major scales before high school and all minor scales before college
- are well rounded and technically proficient on all of the instruments in the percussion family
- can play suitably advanced repertoire on each of the major solo percussion instruments at each grade level
- listen to their fellow musicians and make music connected to their ears and breath
- continue to grow and learn more about their instrument every year
- become lifelong performers of the instrument.

7TH GRADE (YEAR 2)

SNARE DRUM

Having spent the first year of your students' study focused on becoming comfortable with the mechanics and application of the full stroke, your students are certainly ready to move on and expand their 'tool box' of techniques. It is important to continue to pursue the full stroke and double bounce 'stroke rolls.' As you progress through the year it is a good time to introduce

new techniques, and to increase the challenge level on the techniques already in the student's hands. This can be accomplished by increasing tempo demands, control over dynamics, or hand/limb independence.

In the second year two new stick control techniques, the down stroke and the up stroke, can be introduced. Once again, an approach focused on these simple techniques and how they relate to specific rudiment families will allow your students to make tremendous progress. Here are some thoughts on curricular planning for the second-year percussion student.

Building further on the full stroke and double stroke

Increasing demand on the techniques learned during the first year is a great way to review a little bit, and build on the confidence established early on. At the beginning of the second year, it is a good idea to continue to increase tempo expectations for the stroke rolls and the long roll. It is also a perfect opportunity to introduce another rudiment to your students: the single stroke roll.

The single stroke roll is exactly what it sounds like, a rapid succession of hand to hand single strokes. Students will feel comfortable with learning this rudiment, because they now have the concept of a relaxed full stroke in their minds and hands, and they are comfortable with the concept of practicing a rudiment by establishing a tempo with the metronome and gradually increasing speed. It is important to emphasize that students maintain a controlled relaxed approach to the drum while working on this rudiment, and avoid tense 'twitch' movements to get uncontrolled rapid notes. Students can work on this technique for just a few minutes at the beginning of class each day. An added advantage to using this as an early warm up is that it acts as a good 'stretching' exercise for your student's arms and fingers. After working on their single full strokes with increasing tempo for a few minutes they will have loose relaxed arms and be ready to play whatever music you put in front of them during that class period.

More demand on the stroke rolls

Now that students are comfortable with the stroke rolls and can play them at relatively quick tempi, a fun element to add to the challenge of these rudiments is a kick bass drum. If you have a drum set in your class room, allow students to play quarter notes on the bass drum while they work on their stroke rolls. This is exciting for students because they feel they are finally getting to play at the drum set. It is beneficial to them because they are adding a more concrete sense of timing to their performance of the rudiments. Physically feeling pulse in the body will also produce much more confident and musical percussionists. This practice will also begin to introduce some of the ideas of limb independence to your percussionists which will have great positive effect on your school's jazz program later on.

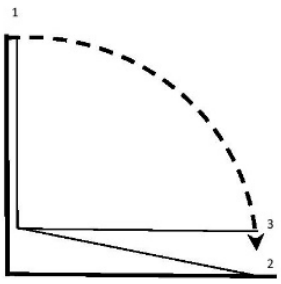
What are "down" strokes and "up" strokes?

Just like the "full stroke" whose name is derived from its full range of motion (from high to low and back to high again), down strokes and up strokes are named to describe the motion involved in their execution.

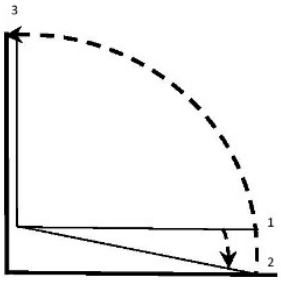
A down stroke begins with the stick perpendicular to the drum head, just like a full stroke. The fingers should be in contact with the stick, but open and away from the palm slightly. From here the stick is motivated by closing the fingers, and dropping the full weight of the forearm towards the drum head. Once contact is made with the stick and the drum head, the fingers remain closed around the stick, the wrist remains straight, and the elbow remains still as well. All of this will allow the stick to stay close to the drum head. It is not necessary for the player to 'squeeze' the stick tightly to keep it from rebounding. Quite simply, your percussionists' arms have much more mass than their sticks do. If their arms don't move back up, the stick won't move back up. There is no reason to clench the muscles to try and force the stick to stay down. In order to avoid this unnecessary tension at first, students should play one down stroke, evaluate it, then play one with the opposite hand, evaluate it, then reset and try again.

An up stroke begins with the stick low and parallel to the drum head. From here, the fingers squeeze the stick to allow it to move to the head. It is important that the stick only move down from the starting position. There should be no preparatory motion upward before the stick comes down. This is something that many students struggle with when first learning the up stroke technique, and should be watched for as they begin to work on it. Once the stick contacts the head, the fingers should relax to allow the stick to rebound on the fulcrum, similar to the rebound of a full stroke. If a student accomplishes this well, their sticks will end in an 'up' position, ready to play a full stroke or down stroke.

Down Stroke

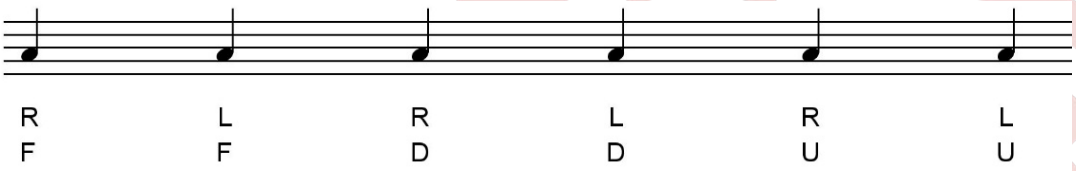


Up Stroke



A simple exercise to work on the mechanical similarities and differences between the three stroke types the student is now working on is to play one of each on each hand, like so:

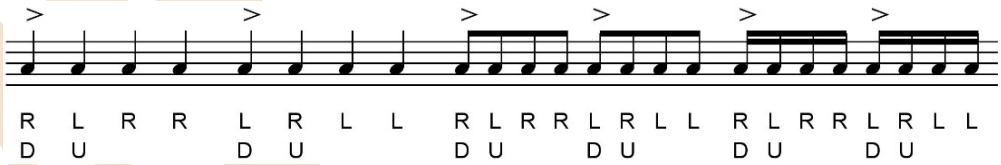
(in this article, stickings will be listed as R [right] or L [left] and directly under the notes. Under that stroke types will be listed as D [down], U [up], and F [full])



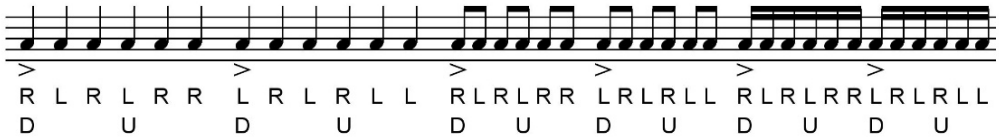
Rudiments

The first place to start with new rudiments after gaining comfort with the down and up strokes is the family of paradiddles. I find it best to teach them in this order:

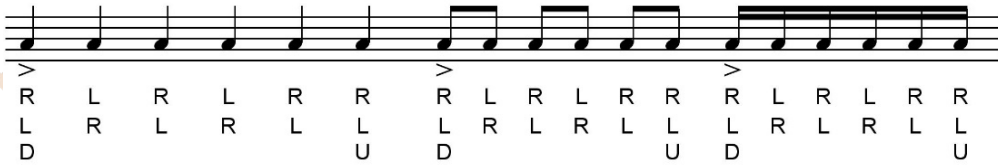
1. Single Paradiddle:



2. Double Paradiddle:



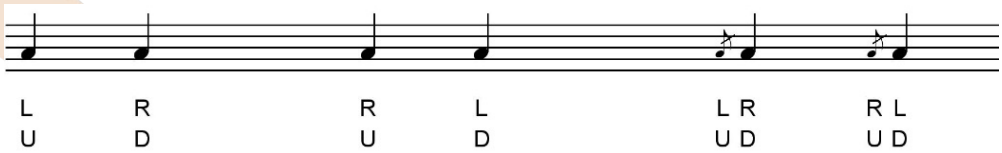
3. Paradiddle-diddle:



The paradiddle family combines the newly leaned down and up strokes with the already comfortable full stroke, or double bounce stroke (depending on the tempo of performance). Thus, students will be given an opportunity through these rudiments to focus on the new techniques being asked of them in isolation. Keeping the information they are working on simple like this will allow them to master the new stroke types and to gain facility with them in a rudimental context. With these new rudiments, it is again appropriate to begin very slowly, with each note equaling about 60bpm, and increase in small increments of 1 – 2 bpm as the playing becomes comfortable.

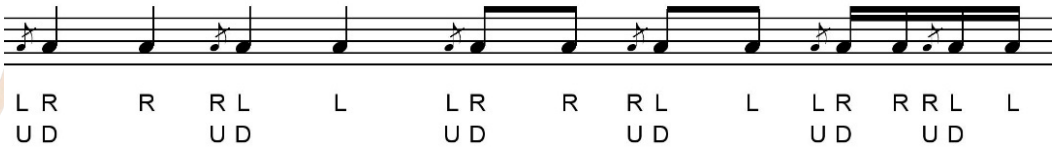
Once students are relatively comfortable with the paradiddle family, it is appropriate to move on to flam rudiments. Flams by themselves are simply a combination of a down stroke and up stroke performed simultaneously. The difference in starting height of these two different strokes will create the difference in timing necessary for the 'flam' sound. The finishing position of each of the strokes will leave the student prepared to play the next flam (if the right hand plays a down stroke, it ends in position to play the next up stroke. If the left hand plays an up stroke, it will end in position to play the next down stroke.) This thoughtful approach to the flam rudiment will allow your students to easily play flams with both hands.

Flams (broken down):

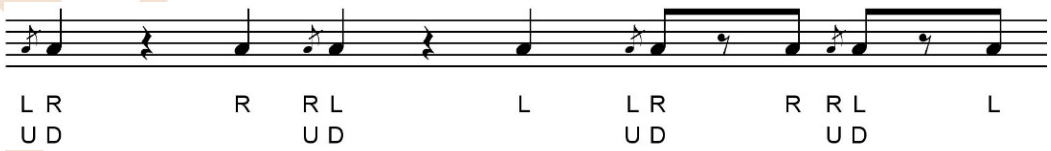


It is possible that as students become more comfortable with learning rudiments over time, they will learn them more quickly. Because of this, it may be reasonable to arrive at this point by the mid-year break of the second year of percussion study. This makes a good stopping point, allowing students to master the mechanics of the flam over the break. Then upon returning they can dig into the rest of the flam family of rudiments. A strong sequence to teaching these rudiments is:

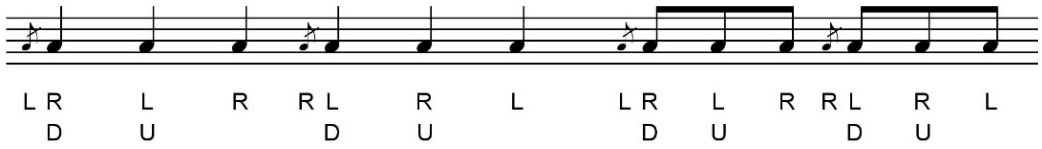
1. Flam Tap



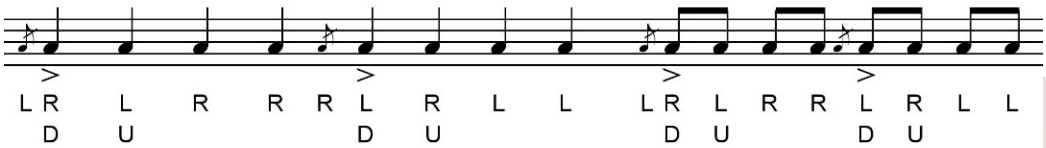
2. Flam Accent number 2



3. Flam Accent number 1

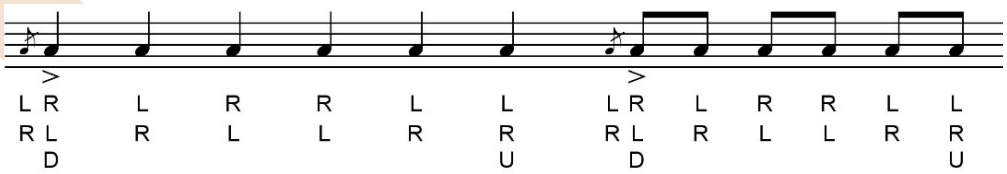


4. Flam Paradiddle



5. Flam Double Paradiddle

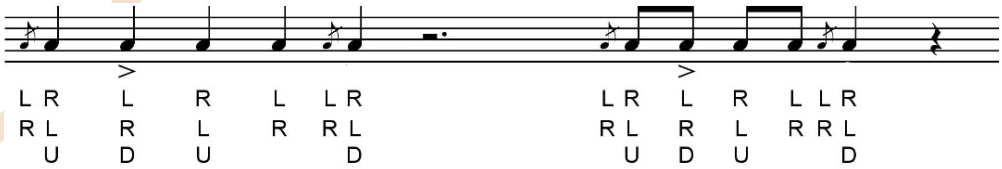
6. Flam Paradiddle-diddle



It is advisable to teach flam accent number 2 before flam accent number 1 because of its similarity to the flam tap. Likewise, flam accent 1 leads naturally to the flam paradiddle because the first simply adds 2 strokes following the flam, and the second adds a third. In this progression students move from a single flam, to flams with 1 additional stroke, to flams with 2 additional strokes, then 3 additional strokes. It is also notable that the group of flam paradiddles are the first group of rudiments students have learned that require them to play one hand three times in a row. It is nice to build up the conceptual and technical ideas of combining flams with other stroke before adding the additional challenge of playing a rudiment that requires three strokes with 1 hand.

If there is still time in the year after accomplishing these rudiments, the final member of the flam family is:

7. Flamaque:



This is the most advanced of the flam rudiments combining upstrokes and down strokes in such a way to phrase away from the down beat, and into the second note of the pattern. If you get to this with your students they can exit their second year of study having learned all of their stroke rolls, all paradiddle rudiments, and all of their flam rudiments, leaving only the family of drag rudiments for the third year. Surely this is a great accomplishment for any student.

Repertoire

As your students begin to gain mastery over a wide variety of new rudiments, a wider range of repertoire becomes available to them. *The All-American Drummer* by Charlie Wilcoxon is an excellent next step. This book contains 150 solos for snare drum that largely contain the rudiments covered to this point. The majority of the solos in this book are quite short – half a page each. This allows students to feel the accomplishment of completing a solo and moving on in a timely manner which helps maintain the student's motivation. The solos in the book are not exactly progressive from simplest to most difficult, some may involve rudiments the students have not yet begun to work on. The instructor should choose pieces that most

closely apply to the work being done in class, not necessarily move directly through the book from start to finish.

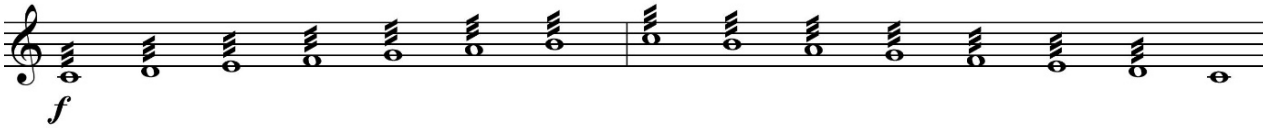
The Village Vanguard fife and drum corps has an online library of traditional rudimental music as well. It can be found on their website at: http://vvfdc.org/sheetmusic.php. These pieces also tend to be shorter and thus more attainable. They also combine the rudiments being worked on to this point, but may involve other rudiments not yet covered. As with the collection above, the instructor should select from this library pieces that most closely apply to the work being done with the students. The pieces in this library carry the added benefit of historic significance to drumming and American music.

MALLETS

As with the first-year curriculum, it is essential to find connections between the work being done on the snare drum and mallets. Continuing to make these connections will create more powerful learning for your students, and will demystify whichever part of the percussion family your students find least comfortable.

Hand technique and rolls

To this end it is worthwhile to draw connection between the emphasis on the single stroke roll discussed in the snare drum section and some technique building in mallets. In the first year of study, students worked on a rhythmic approach to playing rolls. They maxed out by playing 16th notes. begin by having your percussionists play 16th note triplets, and eventually 32nd notes to build on the momentum from the previous year. This exercise can be done while your wind players play long tones at the beginning of class. To make sure your students are building arm strength, it is important that they play these rolls at a full forte dynamic. I like to encourage my students to play this exercise once per day:



Just as long tones build core strength and breath support for your wind players, this exercise will build arm strength and ultimately a full, dark quality of sound across all instruments for your percussionists.

Scales

In terms of scales, it may be necessary to review the four scales emphasized in the first year of study (C, G, F, and Bb). Because there is some familiarity with these scales, it is worthwhile to use them as a tool to build agility in moving up and down the keyboard. Using the technique of establishing a tempo with the metronome and increasing speed by 1 – 2 bpm at a time. Using this technique, it may be reasonable to ask your students to increase their tempo for these 4 scales as much as 25 beats per minute each month of instruction. Thus, having left off

playing these scales in eighth notes at quarter note = 90 at the end of year one, students may expect to reach tempos of 105, 130, 155, and 170 for these four scales by the mid-year break. If this is difficult to accomplish during class time, it is possible to assign these tempo goals to students as practicing homework, and to check in with them in class only periodically.

In terms of adding new material to the repertoire of scales at your students' disposal, it is worthwhile to add four more this year: D, A, Eb, and Ab major. Take the opportunity to reinforce, or repeat lessons about patterns of whole and half steps while teaching these scales. Remember to reinforce stick position on the bars of the instrument, and the concept of rebounding up and over from one bar to the next, so that the stick always moves only straight down towards the bar being struck. Because students are already comfortable with the concept of the pattern of a major scale, it is reasonable to expect that students will be able to learn these four new scales in the first semester of the year.

After the mid-year break, students should be ready to add new concepts to this base. Using the concept of counting half step and whole step patterns, students can easily learn the arpeggios for the 8 major scales they know. Advancing through arpeggios so early on is possible for percussion students because they do not need to worry about the issues of 'hearing' the pitches, manipulating an embouchure, or adjusting air speed to produce leaps in pitch. A good technique to practicing these scales and arpeggios which will help in reading skills is to play each one three times. The first time, have students look directly at the natural bars. The second time, students should look at the accidental bars. The third time they should look past the instrument at the music stand, or director. This practice will enable students to expand their peripheral vision.

It is important as students work on their scales and arpeggios that they play them in 2 octaves as much as possible. Because they have odd numbers of pitches, if the student begins a given scale or arpeggio with the right hand, the second octave will begin with the left. Thus, playing in two octaves will allow the student equal strength in playing these exercises with both the left and right hand.

(example of 2-octave sticking of major scale and arpeggio)

<u>Reading and repertoire</u>

Building upon the foundation from the previous year, design or select reading exercises considering the following ideas:

1. Keep the material mostly linear still. Begin to introduce leaps methodically with octaves first. The octave leap allows students to practice moving large distances on the keyboard visually. It also reinforces the recognition of pitch classes as a concept across the instrument, rather than just a note in a single place. This type of leap might not be as common in the literature available to younger wind players, because they have different demands in producing the interval. It is relatively easy for percussion students to simply strike two bars far apart from each other, however.

2. Begin to increase rhythm from slower rhythms (whole, half, or quarter notes) to faster rhythms including 8th notes, triplets, and 16th notes. Octave leaps should be introduced with slower rhythms like whole and half notes, allowing students time to recognize the leap and to prepare for it.

3. Begin to prepare for and introduce rolls. As you increase the speed of rhythms, playing 16th notes on a single pitch is good preparation for playing rolls. Begin to introduce rolls first with longer rolls that begin and end on the same pitch. This allows students to focus on recognizing the roll without having to deal with the technical challenge of releasing the roll onto a different note. Towards the end of the year, it makes sense to have them release rolls onto the next note up or down the keyboard.

4. Continue to consider having your students sing the note names, either before they actually play the exercise, or as they are playing it. The act of singing the note names will increase visual recognition of the notes on the staff. It will also continue to connect musical phrasing to the length of a breath in a way that percussionists may not intrinsically understand without singing being part of their curriculum.

In terms of repertoire, students should continue to progress through the etudes of Morris Goldenberg's *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, and Vibraphone*, as well as whatever repertoire you are working on in your beginning band books. That combined with some carefully selected reading exercises will keep your students on track to gaining significant strength on mallet instruments.

CONCLUSION

Following this layout for second-year percussionists allows them to continue to build on the strong technical and music foundation from their first year of study. By continuing to focus on one or two simple techniques and methodically applying them to the different instruments of the percussion section, you will have students who advance more quickly through your program, and who are well on their way to mastering all of the standard rudiments, their major scales, and can approach many technical challenges in any music put in front of them. On top of this, you also begin to teach your students that though percussion is a complex

family of instruments, they can and will reach high levels of accomplishment by focusing on growing foundational techniques little by little.

Scott Farkas is an assistant professor of music, and director of athletic bands at the College of Southern Idaho where he coordinates the percussion department. He has worked in public school systems teaching percussion to students from grades 5 – 12 in many contexts throughout his career. He has also served as a member of the percussion staff for the RAIDERS Drum and Bugle Corps. He is committed to expanding the community of percussionists by maintaining an active performance schedule, commissioning and creating new pieces of music for percussion, and engaging with local communities to expose them to the possibilities of percussion music. To this end, he curates, composes for and performs in the experimental "Stage Door Series" of performances at the College of Southern Idaho. As a founding member and the current vice president of the Idaho Bandmasters' Association, Mr. Farkas is also dedicated to expanding and enhancing access to music education across the state of Idaho.