

**IMPORTANT:**

**THIS PACKET IS INTENDED TO  
SERVE AS A SORT OF  
*TEXTBOOK.***

**WE WILL REFER STUDENTS  
TO STUDIES WE WANT THEM  
TO LEARN, BUT  
IMMEDIATELY LEARNING  
EVERYTHING IN THIS PACKET  
IS NOT A REQUIREMENT TO  
BE IN THE UHS DRUM LINE.**



# University High School

## Marching Percussion Technique Packet

Congratulations on taking your first steps toward becoming a member of the UHS Drumline! In this packet, you will find material that will be utilized during the audition process and throughout the entire season. You will also find important information regard the season – including detailed information about technique and each exercise as well as tips for being successful. Please read and study this information carefully before you play to establish the proper technique right away.

Please understand that all previous members of the UHS Percussion section and all prospective new members will have equal opportunity to earn a spot on their desired instrument. There are no “automatic” re-acceptances – **ALL** vets will have to earn their spots and roles again each season.

Finally, keep in mind that although there are many principles of percussion pedagogy that are common to all, every instructor is different. If the ideas in this packet are different than what you have previously learned, that is fine – however, this is the approach we want you to start learning. Please keep an open mind.

### INSTRUCTIONAL CLINIC INFORMATION

There will be an instructional clinics held at the University High School band room on:

<b>Monday, May 7 2018 (Informational Meeting/clinic)</b>	<b>4:30 pm – 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Monday, May 14 2018 (Clinic)</b>	<b>4:30 pm – 6:30 pm</b>

Clinics are designed to give prospective students the opportunity to get to know the percussion staff, other percussionists, and become familiar with the technique that will be required to play in the ensemble. The clinics are optional, but it is highly recommended that everyone attend for some aspects of technique may change from season to season. Students are asked to **bring a drum practice pad** to this clinic that way everyone can play at all times.

### AUDITION INFORMATION

<b>Monday, May 21 2018</b>	<b>4:30 pm – 6:30 pm</b>
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Auditions will consist of both an individual and ensemble portion to evaluate the students’ understanding of the material presented. We will also interview section-leaders and have the full percussion section announced by **Wednesday, May 23**. Students may bring their own sticks/mallets and **must have a copy of the packet** with them.

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Questions concerning the content of this packet may be directed to Marvin Wright at [mwright7@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:mwright7@mix.wvu.edu) and Ross Justice at [rossjusticewv@gmail.com](mailto:rossjusticewv@gmail.com). Also, students should remain informed of any potential changes to schedules by regularly checking the UHS Band website – [www.uhsband.net](http://www.uhsband.net).

Good luck with you preparation – we look forward to seeing you!

**The UHS Percussion Staff**

# INSTRUMENT SPECIFIC TECHNIQUE

## SNARE DRUM:

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**Grip:** Traditional

**Right Hand:** All fingers should be comfortably wrapped around the stick with the thumb directly across from the index finger. This creates a solid *fulcrum*. For the most part, all of your fingers should always be on the stick while avoiding tension. Faster tempos may create an exception to this. Your elbows should rest comfortably down from your shoulders. There should be no contact with your body or forced excessive extension away from your body.

**Left Hand:** The Stick should be held between the base of your thumb and index finger to create a solid *fulcrum*. The fulcrum of your left hand should be at the same point on the stick as your right hand. The rest of the stick will rest on your ring finger just below the first joint and slightly above the nail. The index and middle finger should be comfortably wrapped around the stick while avoiding tension. Faster tempos may create an exception to this. The pinky finger should follow the natural curve of your hand.

**Set Position:** Your sticks should create a 90-degree angle in the center of the drumhead. The butt end of the sticks should be slightly elevated. Keep your beads  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch apart and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the drumhead.

## BASS DRUMS:

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**Grip:** Matched

**Both Hands:** All fingers should be comfortably wrapped around the stick with the thumb directly across from the index finger. This creates a solid *fulcrum*. For the most part, all of your fingers should always be on the stick while avoiding tension. Faster tempos may create an exception to this. Your elbows should rest comfortably down from your shoulders. There should be no contact with your body or forced excessive extension away from your body.

**Set Position:** Your mallets should be at about a 45-degree angle with your forearm parallel to the ground. The head of the mallet should be directly in the center of the head resting  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the head. The butt end of the mallets should be further out from the head than the head of the mallets.

## CYMBALS:

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**Positions:**

**Vertical:** Cymbals should be at eye level with knots of the straps directly in front of your eyes. Cymbals are held in an upside-down "V" shape (also referred to as an "A" frame) with right cymbal slightly overlapping the left (1-2 inches). Elbows should make over a 90-degree angle bend.

**Horizontal:** Both cymbals should be at waist level with right cymbal above left. Angle the cymbals diagonally across the body making a 45-degree angle with the ground. There should be 1-2 inches between cymbals, perfectly parallel to one another. Cymbals should not rest against body.

**Set/Resting:** This is the position used when the ensemble is at attention. Cymbals should be comfortably at your side with a gentle bend in your elbows and parallel to the body without making contact. To achieve a straight line with the cymbals, you may need to add gentle pressure with the fingertips.

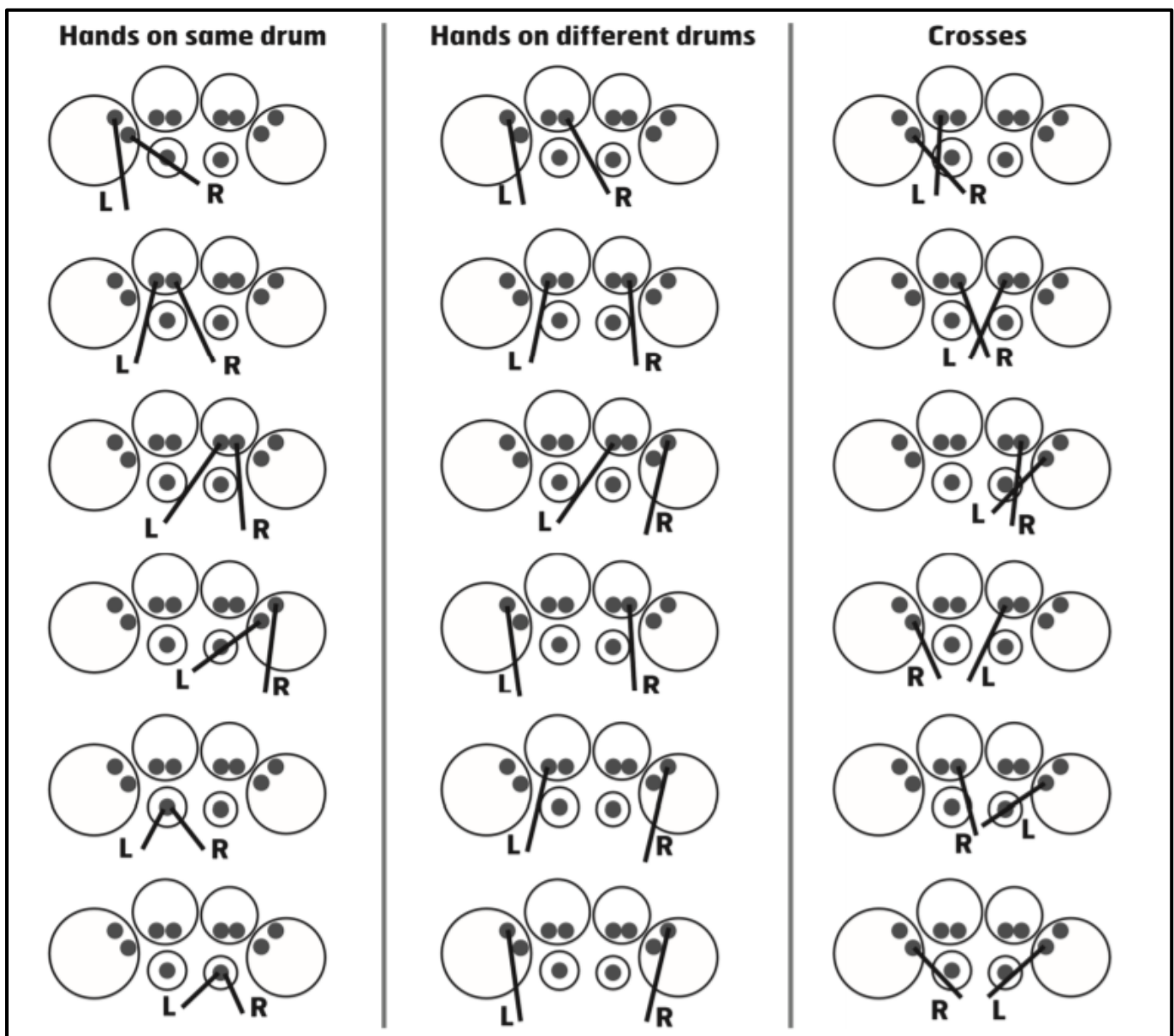
## QUADS:

**Grip:** Matched

**Both Hands:** All fingers should be comfortably wrapped around the stick with the thumb directly across from the index finger. This creates a solid *fulcrum*. For the most part, all of your fingers should always be on the stick while avoiding tension. Faster tempos may create an exception to this. Your elbows should rest comfortably down from your shoulders. There should be no contact with your body or forced excessive extension away from your body.

**Set Position:** Your hands should be relatively flat with the sticks turned very slightly inward due to the angle of your forearm. The sticks should be pointing downward toward the drums at an angle of between 10 and 20 degrees. This will prevent the butts of the sticks from hitting rims or hardware – and it will save your knuckles. It also projects an aggressive look of control over the drums.

**Playing Areas:** The playing areas on a set of quads are much like the playing areas on a set of timpani. You will get the best sounds when the head is stick about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the way from the rim to the center of the head. The high spock drum (spike) is the exception – it should be hit directly in the center.



## KEYBOARDS:

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**Grip:** Matched (2-mallet)

**Both Hands:** All finders should be comfortably wrapped around the stick with the thumb directly across from the index finger. This creates a solid *fulcrum*. For the most part, all of your fingers should always be on the stick while avoiding tension. Faster tempos may create an exception to this. Your elbows should rest comfortably down from your shoulders. There should be no contact with your body or forced excessive extension away from your body.

**Set Position:** Your hands should be low and tilted upward to where the yarn of your mallets is above your hands and the angle of the shaft is 45-degrees or greater. From this position, you can play **full strokes** or **piston strokes** in which the stick starts at the high position, strikes the instrument, and returns to the high position all in one fluid motion.

**Playing Areas:** The playing areas on a keyboard instrument may vary depending on the situation. The most ideal spot to strike the instrument is in the center of the bar – right over the resonator tubes. You can also strike the bars on the very edge; this will be particularly useful with faster passages that utilize the “black keys.” The one spot you must avoid while playing is called the

## STICK & Mallet REQUIREMENTS

The UHS Percussion Department will use Vic Firth sticks and mallets for the season. Students are encouraged to wait until they are granted a spot on a specific instrument before buying the required sticks/mallets.

*Note: Students should have a separate pair of sticks that they use only for shows/competitions.*

**Snare:** TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic

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**Quads:** TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic

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**Bass\*:**

- 1) TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic
- 2) TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic
- 3) TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic
- 4) TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic
- 5) TBA at the Friday, May 11 Clinic

\*Some recycled bass mallets may be available at the school. Because of the price of mallets, I would recommend using them, but they are only to be used for rehearsals!

# STROKES

## LEGATO STROKE:

This is the most basic stroke. The most important characteristic of this stroke is the rebound. It is very important that you allow physics to do the work for you. Stay relaxed – don't pound the drum. Play "through" the drumhead and let the natural rebound bring the stick back up to you. Never lift the stick off the head. The less you interfere with the natural motion of the stick, the better the sound that you will produce.

## DOWN STROKE:

The down (staccato) stroke is exactly the same as the legato stroke until the stick or mallet makes contact with the drum head. Rather than allowing the stick to rebound, it must be stopped low to the head. This is achieved by using the weight of your arm to not allow the stick to come back up. Again, until the stick makes contact with the head, it's the same as playing a legato stroke.

## UP STROKE:

This stroke starts at a lower height and then, after striking the head, rebounds to a greater stick height. Knowing when and where to use an upstroke is essential to solid Efficiency of Motion. **Efficiency of Motion** is a drummer's ability to get their stick where it needs to be with the least amount of energy spent. For example, when playing a Paradiddle (RLRR or LRLR) with accents on the first note, a drummer who understands EOM will know to utilize an upstroke on the second note to get from the tap height to the accent height without any extra effort.

# THE HEIGHT SYSTEM

mp – 3"

Sticks are parallel to the drumhead.

mp+ – 4"

Almost the same as 3", but with a little extra emphasis (don't overthink it).

mf – 6"

Sticks are at a 20-degree angle (about the height of a dollar bill)

f – 9"

Sticks are at a 45-degree angle (half between parallel and perpendicular)

ff – 12"

Sticks are at a 90-degree angle (vertical sticks, perpendicular to drumhead)

fff – 15"

Sticks are vertical and a significant amount of arm is added to the stroke.

Most of the time, two heights will be used simultaneously (accents/taps). An example of how that might look is: ff/mp  
→ The first dynamic is the accent height and the second dynamic is the tap height. For this particular example, the accents would be 12" and the taps would be 3" in relation to the drumhead. To navigate between the two heights, one would need to utilize the different stroke types.

# MUSIC NOTATION KEY

## GENERAL NOTATION:

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff shows five techniques: Accent (note with >), Slightly Above Tap Height (note with -), Shot (note with ^), Stick Click (note with x), and With Arm (note with V). The second staff shows four techniques: At Edge (note with E), Halfway (note with 1/2), At Center (note with C), and Crossover (note with a curved line).

## CYMBAL PART ASSIGNMENTS & POSITIONS:

A single staff of musical notation showing eight techniques: Unison, Front Line, Back Line, Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Vertical Position (note with V), and Horizontal Position (note with H).

## CYMBAL SOUND VOCABULARY:

Two staves of musical notation showing various cymbal sounds. The first staff includes: Crash, Crash Choke (note with V), Choke (note with +), Sizzle (for note value) (note with a wavy line), Slide (note with a curved line), Smash (note with a square), and Figure 8 Smash (note with a figure 8 symbol). The second staff includes: Tap, Muted Tap (note with a vertical line), Bell Tap (note with a square), Vacuum (note with a vertical line), Punch (note with ^), Inverted Punch (note with v), Open Roll (note with z), and Zing (note with a vertical line and a squiggle).

## TIPS FOR REACHING YOUR POTENTIAL

*Read This Carefully Before Proceeding to the Notes!*

➤ **Play with a metronome.**

Humans are fallible. Metronomes help us come one step closer to achieving perfect timing. The more you play with a metronome, the more you will internalize time, and the more rhythmically solid you will become.

➤ **Practice things slow.**

If you can't play something slow, do you think you'll be able to play it fast? Probably not. Take music at a manageable speed – one that makes it possible to play without stopping and to focus on stroke, timing, sound control, etc. Once you master slower tempos, increase the bpm by 10 and continue the process. You will get better, faster – I promise!

➤ **Learn music/practice in small chunks.**

Don't just mindlessly run through exercises. Take music beat by beat, then bar by bar, then phrase by phrase, and then rehearsal mark by rehearsal mark. If you break things down in your mind, you will be able to concentrate on the right things the whole time.

➤ **Play in front of a mirror.**

It is the easiest way to check heights, stroke, and stick/cymbal angles. It also helps us correct problems in mechanics like slicing that can cause inconsistencies in our sound.

➤ **Practice every day.**

You don't have to practice every moment until auditions (although, you'd probably be really good by then if you did!), but consistent practice will inevitably help you better your playing. Even if it's just playing during commercials while you're watching TV - every little bit helps.

### **THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE PRACTICING:**

**The secret to success in marching percussion is being organized and attentive to the details.** *What* you practice is not as important as *how* you practice. To demonstrate what I mean, I have written technique notes for each exercise to consider and also a detailed list of objectives for you to work to achieve. Be creative – explore the exercise and find new ways to play it– but always strive for perfection in whatever you are playing!



# EIGHTS

Orban

♩ = 100 - 200+

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The time signature is 4/4. The notation consists of four measures of eighth notes. Below the staff, the following indicators are written: R →, L →, R →.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The time signature is 4/4. The notation consists of four measures of eighth notes. Below the staff, the following indicators are written: L →, R →, L →.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The time signature is 4/4. The notation consists of four measures of eighth notes. Below the staff, the following indicators are written: R R R R R L R L →.

# EIGHTS

**A** Exercise #1  
(in various keys)  
♩ = 100 - 170

Musical notation for Exercise #1, consisting of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, and the second staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, ending with a whole rest.

**B** Exercise #2 - Mixolydian (b7)  
(in various keys)  
♩ = 100 - 140

Musical notation for Exercise #2, consisting of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, and the second staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, ending with a whole rest.

**C** Exercise #3 - "Bicycle" Rhythm Section  
(in various keys)  
♩ = 140 - 200

Musical notation for Exercise #3, consisting of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, and the second staff contains four measures of eighth-note chords, ending with a whole rest.

# ACCENT TAP

Orban

♩ = 100 - 180

*f* *p*

R →  
L →

R →  
L →

R → L → R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R

# DOUBLEBEAT

Orban

♩ = 100-175+

Musical staff 1: Four measures of music in 4/4 time. The first measure has a right-hand stroke (R →), the second a left-hand stroke (L →), and the third a right-hand stroke (R →). The fourth measure is unlabeled.

Musical staff 2: Four measures of music in 4/4 time. The first measure has a left-hand stroke (L →), the second a right-hand stroke (R →), and the third a left-hand stroke (L →). The fourth measure is unlabeled.

Musical staff 3: Four measures of music in 4/4 time. The first measure is unlabeled, the second has a right-hand stroke (R), the third has a left-hand stroke (L), and the fourth has a right-hand stroke (R).

# TIMING EXERCISES

Orban

## 16th Note Grid

16th Note Grid exercise in 4/4 time, consisting of three staves of rhythmic patterns with fingerings:

- Staff 1:  $\frac{4}{4}$  R L R L → R R R R L L L L
- Staff 2: R R R R L L L L R R L L
- Staff 3: R R L L R L R L R L R L

## Triplet Grid

Triplet Grid exercise in 12/8 time, consisting of three staves of rhythmic patterns with fingerings:

- Staff 1:  $\frac{12}{8}$  R L R L R L → R L R L L R L R
- Staff 2: R L R L R L R L L R
- Staff 3: R L R R R L L L

## 16th Note Timing

16th Note Timing exercise in 4/4 time, consisting of four staves of rhythmic patterns with fingerings:

- Staff 1:  $\frac{4}{4}$  R L → R L R R L R R L L L R R L R R L
- Staff 2: L R L L R L R L L R L R L R L R
- Staff 3: R L R L L L L L R L R L R R R L R L
- Staff 4: R R L L R R L R L R L L R L R L R

# DUPLE ROLLS

♩ = 150 - 240+

Orban

**A**

**B**

Musical notation for exercise A, consisting of four measures of music in 4/4 time. The notes are quarter notes, and the exercise is divided into four measures. The first measure contains four quarter notes, the second contains four quarter notes, the third contains four quarter notes, and the fourth contains four quarter notes. The notes are: Measure 1: G4, A4, B4, C5; Measure 2: D5, E5, F5, G5; Measure 3: A5, B5, C6, D6; Measure 4: E6, F6, G6, A6. The notes are grouped in pairs with beams. The rhythm is indicated by the sequence of letters R L R L →.

**C**

Musical notation for exercise C, consisting of four measures of music in 4/4 time. The notes are quarter notes, and the exercise is divided into four measures. The first measure contains four quarter notes, the second contains four quarter notes, the third contains four quarter notes, and the fourth contains a quarter note followed by a half rest. The notes are: Measure 1: G4, A4, B4, C5; Measure 2: D5, E5, F5, G5; Measure 3: A5, B5, C6, D6; Measure 4: E6, F6, G6, A6. The notes are grouped in pairs with beams. The rhythm is indicated by the sequence of letters R L R L →.

# TRIPLET ROLLS

♩ = 150 - 180

Orban

**A**

12/8  
R L R L R L →

The first staff of section A shows a 12/8 time signature. It contains two measures of music. The first measure has six eighth notes, and the second measure has six eighth notes. Below the first measure, the rhythm is indicated as R L R L R L →.

The second staff of section A continues the rhythmic pattern from the first staff, consisting of two measures of eighth notes.

**B**

R L R L R L →

The first staff of section B shows a 12/8 time signature. It contains two measures of music. The first measure has six eighth notes, and the second measure has six eighth notes. Above the first measure, the rhythm is indicated as R L R L R L →. There are accents (>) over the first and third notes of each eighth note triplet.

The second staff of section B continues the rhythmic pattern from the first staff, consisting of two measures of eighth notes with accents.

**C**

R L R L R L →

The first staff of section C shows a 12/8 time signature. It contains two measures of music. The first measure has six eighth notes, and the second measure has six eighth notes. Above the first measure, the rhythm is indicated as R L R L R L →. There are accents (>) over the first and third notes of each eighth note triplet.

The second staff of section C continues the rhythmic pattern from the first staff, consisting of two measures of eighth notes with accents.