

PERCUSSION SUPPLEMENT

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Here are some extra details to make your overall Percussion experience easier, more complete, and more enjoyable. However, this is a greatly *shortened* collection of information. It's easy to find a wealth of helpful suggestions:

- **Listen** to your Teacher's advice
- **Study** from experts (whether in person, from a book, or in videos)
- **Practice** these specialized techniques
- **Learn** Solos, and ...
- **Enjoy!**

You might start with [this site](#), named "[Percussion 101: A Video Guide to Essential Percussion Techniques](https://ae.vicfirth.com/education/percussion-101/percussion-101-concert-snare-drum/)" at this link: <https://ae.vicfirth.com/education/percussion-101/percussion-101-concert-snare-drum/> Then, consider the following suggestions:

BE ORGANIZED IN YOUR SECTION (be proud of your very special role in the ensemble)!

- **Put things away daily:** "*a place for everything, and everything in its place*" **Tip:** do your part to maintain great organization for your Percussion Cabinet, drawers, closet, pegboards, lockers, and all other storage areas in your bandroom.
- **Take inventory** ("*is everything accounted for?*"), and **assess equipment regularly** (*the care, repair, maintenance, etc.*)
- **Be organized at your own playing station** (*especially when you're playing multiple instruments*)
- **Be a great "Percussion Ambassador" for your non-percussionist classmates: consistently demonstrate how special the Percussion Section is** (*especially because sometimes non-percussionists think they can play your instruments without instruction, but these are not toys*)
- **Extra Tips:**
 - Avoid putting anything on top of the Percussion instruments (*especially Timpani and Mallet instruments*)
 - Add a nice *black* towel to the desk of a music stand to hold sticks, mallets, and small accessories *without causing extra noise* (also consider it for muffling/muting, and even to wipe your sweaty hands!)
 - You *can* move your music from one station (e.g. snare drum) to another (Toms); make a plan, and set up extra music stands beforehand.
 - *Breathe* with the rest of the ensemble for better, more precise entrances
 - Everything you'll play is a Solo ... be confident (*and accurate!*)

BE ORGANIZED WITH YOUR MUSIC!

- **Organize your folder and its contents, and keep track of everything:** don't lose music!
- **Mark each piece with a pencil.** Pencil your *name* at the top of the sheet; when a sheet shows multiple instruments, identify (circle?) the instruments you're playing; consider listing your *needs* on the sheet (sticks/mallets, small instruments, etc.) along with a sketch of your set-up. **Tip:** To organize

yourself when playing more than one instrument in a piece, pencil in your own instructions.
 Example – “To Triangle”, or “→TRI”

- **Your Section has a master *Part Assignments* chart** (“who-plays-what” on each composition): *keep a copy* in your Folder, and post a main copy in the Percussion Section
- **Consider creating a detailed version of *your own assignments*:** whether it’s a chart or a simple list, write down what you do on each piece (Example: “On *Dedicatory Overture*, I play *Snare Drum*”).
- **Ask your Teacher *what piece(s) you’ll be playing first/next*.** Percussionists need time to be ready with music, instruments, mallets, and more; ultimately, that is *your* responsibility so learn to plan ahead.
- **You can find plenty of organizational help online. Try [my website](https://www.robinlinaberrymusic.com/book-resources):**
<https://www.robinlinaberrymusic.com/book-resources> (Choose RW7.1 through RW7.12; these free files are all about Percussion)

BE WILLING TO WORK ON THE MANY SKILLS HELPFUL TO YOUR PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT:

- **Work on mastering *both Rudimental Roll sounds* (aka the “*double-bounce*” roll or “*open*” roll) and *Orchestral Roll sounds* (aka the “*multiple bounce*,” “*buzz*,” or “*closed*” roll)**

Open (Rudimental/Double-Bounce) Roll

Closed (Buzz/Orchestral) Roll

The "z" stem denotes the 'buzz' roll in most Drumline music ...

... but tremolo symbols are more common in classic notation.

- **Learn the sound of *Cut-releases* (separation) vs *Tied-releases* (connection). That is:**

Connected Rolls

Separated ('Cut') Rolls

The Tie indicates that the Roll connects to the next stroke, but ...

... without Ties, Rolls are 'cut', leaving a separation before the next note

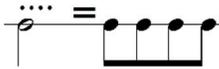
- **Know the relationship between the playing area and the sound** (remember, it’s all about *the sound!*)
- **Work to be able to choose double-strokes to help play fast passages cleanly with *less effort***

Molto Vivace (♩ = 200)

Fast passages can become very clumsy when we use typical *alternating sticking* (R-L) ...

By carefully using *open double-strokes* (RR, LL), we can play a clean-sounding version with *much* less effort.

- **Be flexible: be willing to *experiment* before making your final choices about sticks/mallets, sticking, and all other aspects of your playing** (*The sound is your goal*) **Tip:** Once you know exactly what *sound* you've chosen, write down what stick/mallet you've chosen (similarly, note your choice of cymbal, triangle, cowbell, *etcetera*).
- **Watch out for (and *learn about!*) different types of notation:**
 - 'tremolo' slashes through a note's stem *usually* mean Rudimental rolls
 - "tr" over the note, or a "z" through the stem, or a 'squiggly' stem, or the trill-extension line over the note *all usually* mean Buzz rolls.
 - Also, sometimes we see "shortcuts" (for instance, four dots over a half-note means to "play four 8th-notes")



- *Notation* isn't as standardized for Percussion as it is for other instruments. You might encounter special notation for special techniques (e.g. picture notation; +/° for closed/open; *text* in various languages, like "piatti" for *Cymbals* <https://www.orchestralibrary.com/reftables/perc.html>); *graphic* notation (e.g. speeding up / slowing down) ... here's an example from <https://www.onlinedrummer.com/pages/drum-key>

☐ BE AN ALL-AROUND PERCUSSIONIST:

- Learn to read *itches* in both the Treble and Bass Clefs. You'll need music-reading skills for Timpani, and all sorts of Mallet/Keyboard percussion. Plus, music-reading is important for *all* musicians anyway.
- Gain experience on all the major groups (Snare Drum; Timpani; Mallets; Concert Auxiliary Instruments like Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Toms, etc.).
- Learn techniques for a wide variety of smaller auxiliary instruments including: Congas, Bongos, Timbales, Cowbell, Agogo Bells, Tambourine, Cabasa, Guiro, Triangle, Shakers, Claves, Castanets, VibraSlap, *etcetera, etcetera*
- Learn about *World Percussion* instruments and their techniques (Some examples: Hand drums, Cajon, Talking drums, Djembe, Bodhràn, Doumbek, Lion's Roar, Cuica, Surdo, Samba Whistle, Steel Pan, and *so many more!*)
- Play all types of Marching/Drumline instruments and learn their special techniques
 - special SD techniques, e.g. back-sticking, playing on adjacent drums
 - holding-carrying-playing Quad/Quint Toms (incl. crossover stickings and double-strokes to change drums)
 - special cymbal techniques
 - Tunable Bass Drums

- Become a Drumset player:
 - develop *independence* of your hands and feet
 - keep *steady* time at slow, moderate, and fast tempos
 - learn basic “grooves” [start with: Rock and straight-8th time; Bossa Nova; Swing/Shuffle; Samba; Jazz Waltz; *and more!* Be sure to learn the techniques for *Brushes*)
 - practice “fills” in each groove
 - learn how to play from *notated* drumset parts
 - play with recordings, and imitate great players
 - *improvise* (it's helpful and it's fun!)
- Practice playing with a 3- and 4-Mallet grip (e.g. Marimba, Vibraphone). **Tip:** Ask your Teacher (and/or a professional percussionist) for guidance on your grip, and especially on the *motion* of your hands/wrists/forearms. Try video lessons too, like these examples: <https://ae.vicfirth.com/education/a-fresh-approach-to-4-mallets/> If this link doesn't work, *don't give up!* Search YouTube using terms like 4-Mallet Percussion Exercises, 4-Mallet Marimba Technique, 4-Mallet Grip, and others.
- Learn basic *repairs* and mechanical tasks (replacing heads; adjusting Snares and throw-off mechanisms; using *mounts*; setting/adjusting cymbal stands; tying the special Crash Cymbals knot; adjusting BD and HH pedals; setup/teardown/adjustments for Concert Toms, Drum Set, portable Mallet instruments, etc.) **Tips:** Check and tighten – but don't *overtighten* – the screws and wing-nuts on your instruments occasionally; these frequently become loosened by vibrations from playing (and moving) the instruments. Be sure your cymbal stands are *always* equipped with felts and sleeves (a \$.30 felt can save a \$300 cymbal!). Important: Ask for your Teacher's specific permission – and maybe a demonstration – before doing anything to the school-owned Percussion instruments.
- Use your Resources! Search for instruction on YouTube (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/@joeldrum9519>) and on notable websites. I especially recommend the “Education” tab on the Vic Firth site: <https://ae.vicfirth.com/education/>
- *Sing* (and do a *lot* of listening!)

☐ AND FINALLY ... This packet should provide you with a good start on your journey to become a complete, well-rounded *Percussionist*. Originally, however, I designed these pages as an important informational supplement to the Percussion Ensemble Etudes in “**Key Sequences – Warm Ups for Band.**” I'll encourage you to play *every part* (every instrument) in the *Key Sequences* Ensembles; these pieces will lead you toward becoming confident with your Rudiments, and will help you develop the very best *Percussion Section* you can have in your school. I hope you'll *have fun(!)*, and I'd love to hear your comments, stories, and successes! r200lina@gmail.com

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