

This Ain't Drumline; Why Should I Care?

How to Engage your Percussionists Throughout Concert Season

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"Concert music, no thanks!"

There is no single method for creating interest in learning new music, especially for a percussionist that only feels at home when carrying a drum or hacking on a practice pad. The objective is to get your students on the instruments, taking ownership of the music, and having fun!

Below are several practical, achievable, (and possibly new) techniques for learning music, creating interest in new music, and tips for band directors on how to creatively include percussionists into daily rehearsal activities. Percussionist's needs should be addressed in the following three areas: 1) individual, 2) small group, 3) full band.

INDIVIDUAL

Break the monotony of wood-shedding notes.

ADD CHORDS

In the two-mallet excerpt below, the first note of each measure is used as the root of a perfect fifth. A "comping" rhythm is offered to fill up the rest of the measure.

original mallet part

Allegro

f

"realized" mallet acc.

Sonata (in e minor) mm. 1-6, by J. S. Bach, arr. Thomas McMillan. *Masterpieces for Marimba* © Copyright 1971 by Belwin Mills. Used with permission.

SWING THE RHYTHMS

“Swing” the original rhythms and even add a jazz ride cymbal/snare drum accompaniment. In this example, the sixteenth-notes are “swung” to produce a triplet feel.

"swung" sixteenth notes

Allegro



SNARE DRUM ON OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Challenge your students to practice snare drum excerpts on accessory instruments like tambourine, triangle, castanets, or have them create a multiple percussion configuration.

♩ = 72 Andante

original snare drum part



Etude #19 mm. 1-8, by Mitchel Peters. Advanced Snare Drum Studies © Copyright 1971 by Mitchel Peters. Used with permission.

SKYPE LESSON

Give your students the opportunity to take a lesson from anyone in the world (provided they have a webcam and internet access)

SMALL GROUP / CHAMBER ENSEMBLE / PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

“If you think about it, drums are the new violins.”

--Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, Dec. 28, 2009

Time is proving that a growing number of composers (and arrangers) are hip to the fact that percussionists can play on multiple instruments in a single piece of music. Additionally, more and more people are realizing that the colors, textures, and musical depth that percussionists draw out of their instruments are not only exhilarating, but virtually limitless!

In spite of an ever-increasing body of Wind Band and Orchestral repertoire that effectively utilizes a percussionists’ musical potential, most music from this genre becomes an exercise in counting rests. To thrive in today’s musical world, a 21st-century percussionist needs to have command of their skills as a chamber musician, and they also need to have opportunities to hone those skills.

ADD CHORDS WITH A BUDDY

Get a buddy to accompany a two-mallet excerpt with chords in a perfect fifth fashion, or use four-mallet chords (major or minor) by using the starting note of each measure as the root.

HAND DRUM (WORLD PERCUSSION) ACCOMPANIMENT

Incorporate world percussion in your classroom by suggesting a hand drum accompaniment for a two-mallet excerpt. The hand drum rhythms below are only suggestions; challenge your students to find their own accompaniment rhythms that match the character of the original two-mallet etude. The generic “edge” and “center” playing spots referenced below can work on a variety of hand drums including; cajon (Afro-Peruvian), conga (Cuba), djembe (West Africa), bodhran (Ireland), doumbek (Middle East), pandeiro (Brazil), frame drum, goblet drum, etc.

The image shows a musical score for a two-mallet excerpt and a hand drum accompaniment. The top staff is labeled "original mallet part" and is in 4/4 time, marked "Allegro" and "f". The bottom staff is labeled "hand drum" and is also in 4/4 time. It includes two types of rhythms: "open or slap (edge)" and "bass tone (center)".

NEW ARRANGEMENT CHALLENGE

When asked his thoughts on the first Percussion Ensemble concert he heard, Michael Colgrass said he didn't like it at all. His teacher then challenged him to “write something he did like.” Colgrass went on to win a Pulitzer Prize in music for his work *Deja Vu for Percussion Quartet and Orchestra*. Could your students be future Pulitzer Prize winners?

FULL BAND

"Rumors of my assimilation have been greatly exaggerated"

--Jean-Luc Picard, Star Trek: First Contact

Whether they admit it or not, percussionists want to and need to be integrated with the full band as much as possible. Usher them across pedagogical lines as they take ownership of the sounds, characteristics, and terminology of the wind and/or string instruments. This awareness and integration with the full ensemble will yield benefits for every section of the group.

DAILY FULL BAND WARM-UP/TUNING TIME

In efforts to further develop the percussionists' technical ability, students can practice selected rudiments from the *Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments* in conjunction with full band warm-up time. Following are examples of two-measure phrases that may be played along with any rhythmic band warm-up.

paradiddles **flam taps**

R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L L R R R L R L L I R Rr L L I R Rr L L I R Rr L L etc.

Technical ability is increased when percussionists get comfortable with a wide variety of hand-to-hand patterns. This is commonly referred to as practicing "Stick Control." (from the method book by George Lawrence Stone)

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

MALLET PERCUSSION IDEAS

The following mallet exercises can be played with, and transposed for, any full band scalar exercise.

eight on a hand

R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R etc. L etc.
 R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc.

sixteenth-note timing

R L R L etc. R L R etc. R L R L etc. R R L etc.
 R L R L etc. R L L etc. R L R L etc. L R L etc.

* three-note groupings may also be played on the first scale degree

STYLE-ORIENTED PERCUSSION SECTION INTEGRATION

In addition to individualized development, section-style playing should be incorporated into the group daily warm-up to develop ensemble skills within the percussion section. Experiment with various dynamics and articulations on each instrument.

*march style**

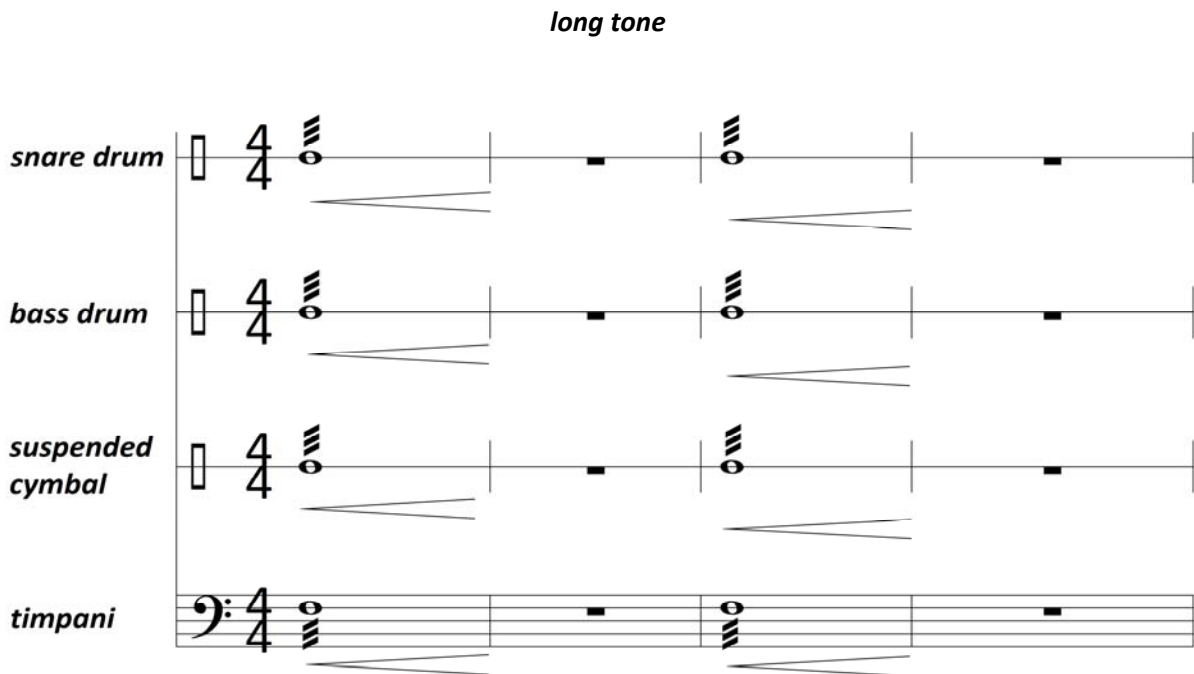


**additional exercises may be created by extracting passages from performance literature*

DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

Incorporate your percussion section into the “basic” elements of your daily warm-up routine. The same logic used for wind fundamentals is also applicable to your percussion section. Percussionists need to refine not only their long tones, but also their accuracy through executing attacks and releases with the winds.

long tone



attack exercise

**may be played on a variety of instruments, with any rhythmic articulation wind instrument exercise.*

long tones with release

**may be played with long tones*

By addressing these foundational building blocks with your percussion section in every rehearsal, it will require them to get acclimated to your conducting, while also accounting for balance and blend. Once you are finished with these exercises, it is a great idea to ask yourself the following questions: "After warm-up...are my winds more prepared to play the literature?" Now, ask the same for your percussion section: "After warm-up...are my percussionists more prepared to play the literature?"

BUILD AND ARRIVE

Percussion instruments can be thought of as instruments that support the *building of music* and instruments that support the *arrival of music*. (credit given to composer Stephen Melillo)

Building Instruments

- concert bass drum roll
- snare drum roll
- suspended cymbal roll
- tambourine roll
- tam tam roll
- timpani roll

Arrival Instruments

- bass drum strike
- crash cymbals
- tam tam strike
- timpani strike
- triangle roll
- tubular chimes

AROUND THE WORLD

Set up a rotation schedule with percussion instruments. This will allow students to familiarize themselves with standard performance techniques and patterns on instruments they might not get assigned in Wind Band literature. Below are some “standard” or “historically informed” patterns / rhythms found on various world percussion instruments.

The image displays musical notation for seven different world percussion instruments, arranged in two rows. Each instrument's pattern is written on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. Above each staff is the instrument name and any specific performance instructions. Below the notation are rhythmic indicators such as 'L R R R L R R' for bongos or 'R L R R L R L R R L' for tom tom.

- shekere**: A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents (>).
- bongos ("martillo" rhythm)**: A pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) and a sequence of 'L R R R L R R' below.
- agogo bells**: A pattern of eighth notes with accents (>).
- timbales (RH "Cáscara" rhythm on rim)**: A pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) and 'x' marks above.
- tom tom (+ = left hand dampen)**: A pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) and '+' marks above.
- congas ("tumbao" pattern) (+ = muffled, o = open)**: A pattern of eighth notes with '+' and 'o' marks above.
- 3:2 "son" clave pattern**: A pattern of eighth notes with a 3:2 clave rhythm.
- guiro**: A pattern of eighth notes with a wavy line above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following companies/organizations for their support of this clinic, as well as their continued dedication to music education:



PERCUSSION CLINIC REFERENCE LIST

McMillan, Thomas. *Masterpieces for Marimba*, Belwin Mills / Alfred Publishing, 1971.

Peters, Mitchell. *Advanced Snare Drum Studies*, Mitchell Peters, 1971.

Stone, George Lawrence. *Stick Control*, George Lawrence Stone, 1935.

www.blackswamp.com

www.evansdrumheads.com

www.innovativepercussion.com

Percussive Arts Society (PAS), *International Drum Rudiments*. ~ www.pas.org/Learn/Rudiments.aspx

www.yamahadrums.com

RECOMMENDED PERCUSSION LITERATURE

INDIVIDUAL SNARE:

Campbell, James - *Rudiments in Rhythm* (Meredith Music)

Cirone, Anthony - *Portraits in Rhythm* (Alfred Publications)

Delécluse, Jacques - *Douze Études pour Caisse-Claire* (Leduc)

Freytag, Edward - *The Rudimental Cookbook* (Row-Loff)

Freytag, Edward - *Just Desserts* (Row-Loff)

Stone, George Lawrence - *Stick Control* (G. B. Stone / Mel Bay)

Stone, George Lawrence - *Accents and Rebounds* (G. B. Stone / Mel Bay)

Tompkins, Joe - *Nine French-American Rudimental Solos* (Bachovich Music)

Various - *The Blue Book: A Test Guide for the Modern Percussionist* (Tapspace)

Živković, Nebojša - *Ten Etudes for Snare Drum* (Studio 4 Music)

INDIVIDUAL TWO-MALLET:

Goldenberg, Morris - *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba and Vibraphone* (Alfred Publications)

Gottlieb, Beth - *Masterworks for Marimba* (Row-Loff)

Green, George Hamilton - *Instruction Course for Xylophone* (Meredith Music)

Johnson, Mark (ed.) - *Solos and Etudes for Marimba* (HoneyRock)

Lawless, Larry - *12 Etudes for 2 Mallet Marimba* (Innovative Percussion)

Peters, Mitchell - *Fundamental Solos for Mallets* (Alfred Publications)

RECOMMENDED PERCUSSION LITERATURE (continued from previous page)

INDIVIDUAL FOUR-MALLET:

Davila, Julie - *Impressions on Wood* (Row-Loff)

Ford, Mark - *Marimba: Technique Through Music* (Innovative Percussion)

Gaines, Julia - *Sequential Studies for Four-Mallet Marimba* (Gaines Publications) - www.marimbalevels.com

Howarth, Gifford - *Simply Four* (TapSPACE)

Morleo, Luigi - *120 Progressive Four-Mallet Studies for Marimba* (HoneyRock)

Quartier, Bart - *Image - 20 Children's Songs for Marimba* (Meredith Music)

Zeltsman, Nancy - *Four-Mallet Marimba Playing* (Hal Leonard)

INDIVIDUAL TIMPANI:

Carroll, Raynor - *Exercises, Etudes and Solos for the Timpani* (Batterie Music)

Horner, Ronald - *The Tuneful Timpanist* (Meredith Music)

Lepak, Alexander - *32 Solos for Timpani* (Windsor Music Publications)

Lepak, Alexander - *50 Master Etudes for Timpani* (Windsor Music Publications)

Peters, Mitchell - *Fundamental Method for Timpani* (Alfred Music)

MULTIPLE PERCUSSION:

Campbell, James & Hill, Julie - *Music for Multi-Percussion: A World View* (Alfred Publications)

Udow, Michael & Watts, Chris - *The Contemporary Percussionist* (Meredith Music)

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE:

Rath, Eric & Hicks, Ralph - *Beyond Basic Percussion* (TapSPACE)

PERCUSSION WEBSITE (STORES):

Lone Star Percussion - www.lonestarpercussion.com

Percussion Source - www.percussionsource.com

Steve Weiss Music - www.steveweissmusic.com

PERCUSSION WEBSITE (PUBLISHERS):

Bachovic Music Publications - www.bachovich.com

C-Alan Publications - www.c-alanpublications.com

HoneyRock Publishing - www.honeyrock.net

Innovative Percussion - www.innovativepercussion.com

Meredith Music Publications - www.meredithmusic.com

Ox and Lamb Music - www.oxandlambmusic.com

Rowloff Productions - www.rowloff.com

TapSPACE - www.tapspace.com

PERCUSSION WEBSITE (RESOURCE):

Percussive Arts Society - www.pas.org

Percussion Music Online - www.percussionmusiconline.com

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS / MALLETS / STICKS / GEAR USED DURING THIS CLINIC

SNARE DRUM	Yamaha Grand Symphonic Concert Snare Drum Evans Strata 700 Concert Snare - CS14S (batter head/top head) Evans Strata Hazy 300 Snare Side - S14H30 (snare side/bottom head)
SNARE DRUM STICKS	Innovative Percussion James Campbell Hickory - IP-JC
BASS DRUM	Yamaha Concert Bass Drum
BASS DRUM MALLETS	Innovative Percussion Concert Bass Drum / Rollers - CB-5
CRASH/HAND CYMBALS	Zildjian 18" Classic Orchestral Medium Heavy Cymbal Pair
SUSPENDED CYMBALS	Zildjian 18" Classic Orchestral Selection Suspended Cymbal
CASTANETS	Black Swamp Professional Concert Castanets - Large Ebony PCC3-E
MARIMBA	Yamaha 5.0-octave Professional Rosewood Marimba
MARIMBA MALLETS	Innovative Percussion Janis Potter - IP 403 Innovative Percussion Robin Engelman ensemble series, IP702, IP703, IP704
MULTIPLE PERCUSSION	Tin Can - Large Green Bean Glass Bottle - Ale-8-One soft drink Mallets - Innovative Percussion Orchestral Series - #OS-6 (LIGHT GLOCK)
HAND DRUM	Authentic frame drum

CONTACT US AT ANY TIME, WE LOVE TO TALK SHOP:



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