

COLTS

PERCUSSION BOOK FRONT ENSEMBLE

FRONT
ENSEMBLE



Thank you for your interest in the 2020 Colts Front Ensemble. In the pages below you will find our basic approach and philosophy. Please read through the entire packet carefully and prepare the exercises for the instrument(s) in which you are auditioning. We wish you the best of luck in your preparation and we look forward to meeting you.

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Philosophy:

As musicians, we are consistently striving for a peak performance, and transcendent musical experience. In order to reach the pinnacle of this drum corps experience, all members must share the same goals and passion for excellence.

First and foremost, we are looking for members who share a **growth mindset**. This open mindset is more important than natural talent. You will be evaluated on your ability to improve, problem solve, and adapt to your surroundings as well as other musicians.

Secondly, we are looking for members who are confident, empathetic, and intentional. It is our goal as educators to cultivate these characteristics in all of our members. We want each member to leave this experience with a better understanding of these characteristics, in hopes that it will add value to their lives beyond drum corps.

Lastly, we are looking for great musicians! We want members who not only understand the high standard of personal sound quality/rhythmic and note accuracy, but also the constant motion and expressiveness that is required for music to move the listener, and change the performer.

Please prepare the following for auditions:

1. All exercises in this packet.
2. A short solo on the instrument(s) you are auditioning that shows off your musicianship and technical facilities.
3. Be ready to play all exercises in all major and minor modes.

Approach:

We always approach our instruments with a calm, relaxed, and confident demeanor. Our specific technique and approach is specially designed to be used outdoors and these techniques are not always appropriate for an inside concert setting.

Sound quality is the most important aspect of our technique. Make sure you are listening to the sound you are producing more than you are worried about the look of your hands. We want a strong and resonant sound, that is even from hand to hand, finger to finger, stick to stick, and mallet to mallet.

Keyboards:

2 Mallets

Back Finger Fulcrum: The fulcrum is the balance point. When using top heavy implements, like mallets, we must shift the fulcrum to the back of the hand. Use your back two fingers to grip the mallet about ½ inch from the back of the mallet. Make sure these two fingers make contact with the center of your hand. The other fingers should lightly rest on the mallet shaft.

Position: Palms should face the ground. Wrists should be low to the board. Elbows should be relaxed and in-line with the shoulder.

Stroke: Should be initiated from the wrist. High velocity is used to create a strong and resonate sound. The stroke should be heavy, relaxed and fast, creating a strong sound from any height/volume.

4 Mallets

We use Leigh Howard Stevens Grip as a foundation to our technique. We will use this grip exclusively on all keyboard instruments. We vary this foundation to achieve an outdoor sound quality.

Position: Hands should always rest in a hand shaking position, with thumbs facing up. The eye of the elbow should also be facing up, and elbows should be in-line with the shoulders. All four mallets should consistently be on the same plane, even when playing with individual mallets.

Stroke: Should be initiated from the wrist. High velocity should be used to create a strong and resonant sound. When playing with individual mallets, the tacet mallet should remain on a consistent plane, while rotating the playing mallet around it. All exercises played at forte should have a plane of 12inches. All planes should be consistent with the dynamic level desired.

Piano/Synthesizer:

Synthesizer is an exposed instrument within the drum corps and requires the ability to quickly problem solve electronics, as well as having a strong foundation in piano skills and basics. This member must be able to handle high pressure situations, and must have outstanding ensemble awareness and listening skills. They also must be able to creatively adapt their technique to a mallet focused ensemble.

Timpani:

The timpanist is a “solo” within the ensemble, therefore, we accept varied techniques, as long that technique can produce success in the following categories. The key to a great timpanist is relaxation. Be relaxed in technique and mindset and coordinate your breath with your movement.

1. Intonation

As the timpanist, you are essentially a member of both the front ensemble and the brass ensemble. You must be able to adapt pitch, depending on the tendencies of the ensemble in various settings and temperatures. It is not uncommon during the heat of the day for the brass ensemble to be sitting at around A=450 Hz while the keyboards have dropped to A=439 Hz! All of this to say—you must have a good ear, while still remaining flexible to what you hear behind you.

2. Rhythmic Accuracy

Rhythmic accuracy is an absolute. There is not room for artistic interpretations of rhythm, which are possible in more “chamber” type of percussion groups or ensembles. Constant practice with a metronome, with different subdivisions, will assist in assuring rhythmic accuracy and analysis.

3. Tone Production

While playing outdoors the timpanist should always strive for a clear, strong, and confident sound. A outdoor timpanist (even with microphones) must play louder than they would in a concert hall. This may require an adjustment on the part of the player who is used to playing inside. We also desire that pitches are placed on lower drums whenever possible (ex. an Ab would go on the 32” as opposed to the 29”), and we strive to use the top 1/3 of the range of each drum primarily. This assists in clarity of pitch, especially at the volume required.

4. Technical Facility

Timpani is an athletic instrument. Efficient motion and use of energy around the drums while maintaining rhythmic accuracy is key. The flexibility to play any combination of drums in any sequence, as well as a comfort playing any rhythm both right or left hand lead, will help develop these technical skills.

5. Pedaling

Drum corps timpani playing is DEFINED by pedaling. Being physically flexible, and having a coordinated set of limbs, will allow success in this area. The basic concept for pedaling is very similar to a trombone player. There are times when a glissando effect is desired, but for most playing, the player should strive to make every note sound separately, and the pitch should be accurate from the very beginning of the note. Gauges must be set at the beginning of each rehearsal or performance. They are not a replacement for one’s ears, but they become essential when the written parts do not allow time to check the pitches.

6. Maintenance of the Drums

The maintenance of the timpani during the summer is usually one of the most neglected tasks of a drum corps timpanist. A great player on drums that do not sound good or work correctly will not sound like a great player at all. Due to the moving of the drums 3 to 4 times a day, they must be constantly cleared daily, and ranges/gauges must be set for every block. The timpanist is in charge of changing heads during the summer, which usually happens 3-4 times throughout the summer.

7. Knowledge of Music Theory

It is a necessity to understand at least the basics of music theory. Many exercises are based around key centers, and the flexibility to understand these exercises from the perspective of intervals and scale degrees, as well as chords and inversions, is an absolute necessity. It also makes understanding where you fit into the brass ensemble harmonies much easier in regards to intonation and phrasing.

Percussion/Drum Set

Much like timpani, a wide range of techniques and styles are acceptable for this position, as long as this technique leads to success in the following areas.

1. Rhythmic Accuracy

In this activity, rhythmic accuracy is an absolute. There is not room for artistic interpretations of rhythm, which are possible in more “chamber” type of percussion groups or ensembles. Constant practice with a metronome, with different subdivisions, will assist in assuring rhythmic accuracy and analysis.

2. Technical Facility

The percussion instruments quite athletic. Efficient motion and use of energy while maintaining rhythmic accuracy is key. The flexibility to play any combination of instruments in any sequence, as well as a comfort playing any rhythm both right or left hand lead, will help develop these technical skills. You should feel comfortable moving from any number of concert instruments (tambourine, triangle, etc...) The drumset player should be able to demonstrate a variety of styles and feels such as but not limited to rock, funk, latin, and swing. In addition both percussion and drumset players should also have a solid foundation in all 40 PAS rudiments.

3. Knowledge of Music Theory

It is a necessity to understand at least the basics of music theory. Many exercises are based around key centers, and the flexibility to understand these exercises from the perspective of intervals and scale degrees, as well as chords and inversions, is an absolute necessity.

7/8 Octaves

This Exercise should be learned in all major, natural minor, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scales. We may or may not decide to apply this exercise to the seven modes, but it would be beneficial to familiarize yourself with the modal patterns.

7/8 Octaves will be taken at a wide variety of tempi. Begin as slow as 60bpm and work towards playing comfortably at 180bpm. You may also consider playing this exercise while holding four mallets, but only utilizing the inside two.

Musical score for the 7/8 Octaves exercise. The score is written for four parts: Keyboards, Timpani, Synthesizer, and Percussion. The time signature is 7/8. The Keyboards part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Timpani part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Synthesizer part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Percussion part features a continuous eighth-note pattern.

Green

This Exercise should be learned in all major, natural minor, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scales. We may or may not decide to apply this exercise to the seven modes, but it would be beneficial to familiarize yourself with modal patterns. We will play this exercise utilizing both right and left hand leads.

Green Scales will be taken at a wide variety of tempi. Begin as slow as 60bpm and work towards playing it comfortably at 180bpm. You may also consider playing this exercise while holding four mallets, but only utilizing the inside two.

During the slower tempi, the bass guitarist may attempt playing the full 16th note pattern as indicated for the keyboards.

Musical score for the Green exercise. The score is written for four parts: Kbd., Timp., Synth., and Perc. The time signature is 4/4. The Kbd. part features a continuous 16th-note pattern. The Timp. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Synth. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Perc. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern.

Blocks

Blocks is designed to strengthen double vertical, and single alternating rotations. This Exercise primarily focuses on the piston stroke and it is important to also focus on managing the plane; ensuring that all of your mallets return to the same height.

Musical score for the Blocks exercise. The score is written for four parts: Kbd., Timp., Synth., and Perc. The time signature is 4/4. The Kbd. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Timp. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Synth. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Perc. part features a continuous eighth-note pattern.

This musical score is arranged in three systems, each featuring four staves: Keyboard (Kbd.), Timpani (Timp.), Synthesizer (Synth.), and Percussion (Perc.).

- System 1:**
 - Kbd.:** Treble clef, key signature of two flats. It begins with a dense block chord in the first measure, followed by a melodic line of eighth notes.
 - Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a steady eighth-note pattern.
 - Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs. The right hand plays block chords, while the left hand plays a simple eighth-note bass line.
 - Perc.:** Snare drum notation with 'x' marks, playing a consistent eighth-note pattern.
- System 2:**
 - Kbd.:** Continues the melodic line with eighth notes and some block chords.
 - Timp.:** Continues the eighth-note pattern.
 - Synth.:** Continues the block chord and eighth-note bass line.
 - Perc.:** Continues the eighth-note snare pattern.
- System 3:**
 - Kbd.:** Ends with a final block chord and a whole rest.
 - Timp.:** Ends with a final eighth note and a whole rest.
 - Synth.:** Ends with a final block chord and a whole rest.
 - Perc.:** Ends with a final eighth note and a whole rest.

8/16

8/16 is designed to strengthen all of the different permutation patterns we utilize. Below is a grid of the different permutations. Again, be sure to focus on managing the plane by concentrating on each mallet's independent rebound. This exercise should begin around 60bpm and built to 170bpm.

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PERMUTATION PATTERNS

Ascending/ Descending	1-2-3-4	4-3-2-1
Outside/ Inside	1-2-4-3	4-3-1-2
Alternating	1-3-2-4	4-2-3-1
Inside/ Outside	2-1-3-4	3-4-2-1

The musical score is organized into three systems, each containing four staves. The staves are labeled Kbd., Timp., Synth., and Perc. on the left. The Kbd. staff uses a treble clef and contains a continuous eighth-note melody. The Timp. staff uses a bass clef and contains a steady eighth-note pulse. The Synth. staff uses a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Perc. staff uses a single line with a snare drum icon and contains a complex pattern of eighth notes and rests, with some notes marked with a circle containing a dot.

This musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring four staves: Keyboard (Kbd.), Timpani (Timp.), Synthesizer (Synth.), and Percussion (Perc.).

- System 1:**
 - Kbd.:** Treble clef, playing a complex melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.
 - Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a simple harmonic line with dotted half notes.
 - Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs, mirroring the Kbd. and Timp. parts respectively.
 - Perc.:** Snare drum notation with 'x' marks and accents, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- System 2:**
 - Kbd.:** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth notes.
 - Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a harmonic line with dotted half notes.
 - Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs, mirroring the Kbd. and Timp. parts respectively.
 - Perc.:** Snare drum notation with 'x' marks and accents, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- System 3:**
 - Kbd.:** Treble clef, playing a melodic line that concludes with a whole note and a double bar line.
 - Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a harmonic line that concludes with a whole note and a double bar line.
 - Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs, mirroring the Kbd. and Timp. parts respectively, concluding with a whole note and a double bar line.
 - Perc.:** Snare drum notation with 'x' marks and accents, playing a rhythmic pattern that concludes with a whole note and a double bar line.

Broccoli

Broccoli is designed around the concept of switching partials within permuted patterns. This Exercise begins at 60bpm and should be worked up to 132bpm. Please also learn in various intervals.

First system of musical notation for the exercise "Broccoli". It consists of five staves: Kbd. (Keyboard), Timp. (Timpani), Synth. (Synthesizer), Perc. (Percussion), and another Synth. staff. The notation shows a sequence of notes and rests across five measures, illustrating the concept of switching partials within permuted patterns.

Second system of musical notation for the exercise "Broccoli". It consists of five staves: Kbd. (Keyboard), Timp. (Timpani), Synth. (Synthesizer), Perc. (Percussion), and another Synth. staff. The notation shows a sequence of notes and rests across five measures, illustrating the concept of switching partials within permuted patterns.

Third system of musical notation for the exercise "Broccoli". It consists of five staves: Kbd. (Keyboard), Timp. (Timpani), Synth. (Synthesizer), Perc. (Percussion), and another Synth. staff. The notation shows a sequence of notes and rests across five measures, illustrating the concept of switching partials within permuted patterns.

This musical score consists of two systems, each featuring four staves: Keyboard (Kbd.), Timpani (Timp.), Synthesizer (Synth.), and Percussion (Perc.).

System 1:

- Kbd.:** Treble clef, playing a continuous eighth-note melody in a major key.
- Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs, playing a continuous eighth-note melody in a major key.
- Perc.:** Percussion clef, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

System 2:

- Kbd.:** Treble clef, playing a continuous eighth-note melody in a major key, ending with a whole note.
- Timp.:** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, ending with a whole note.
- Synth.:** Treble and bass clefs, playing a continuous eighth-note melody in a major key, ending with a whole note.
- Perc.:** Percussion clef, playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, ending with a whole note.


Space and Timing

Space and Timing is set up in a 4-2-1- grid, meaning that we play each subdivision in 4, 2, and 1 note groupings (Indicated by rehearsal letter A, B, and C.) Not only is this exercise used to focus on rhythmic accuracy but also to match the approach of various stroke types across the keyboard and auxiliary percussion ensemble.


For those playing timpani, percussion and synth, this is a great opportunity to learn how to "watch the ensemble for timing as well as practicing rhythmic accuracy.

We begin this exercise at extremely slow tempi (40-60bpm), in order to practice feeling the space between each note. Remember when utilizing the float stroke, it is important to connect the space between each attack with a fluid rebound.


A



B



C



16th Check Patterns

The following check patterns will be used throughout the season in various capacities. Please be able to play through each pattern, inserted into the beginning check for auditions. Please be able to play these starting on both the left and right hands. You should be able to play it with a half note and whole note metronome with 100% timing accuracy.



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

1 R L R 2 R L L 3 R R L 4 L R L

5 R L 6 R R 7 R L 8 L R 9 L L 10 R L

11 R 12 L 13 R 14 L