

Open Drum Book

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August 8, 2021

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What is Marching Percussion?

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Material Requirements

What you need

- Practice Pad and Sticks
- Some form of communications device/internet access (basic smartphone)
- A metronome
- A folder/binder for music
- Consistent transportation
- A whole lot of food and water
- A good attitude!

Other helpful tools

- A Nice Practice Pad
- A Tenor Pad (for tenor players)
- Heavy Practice Sticks
- Music stand/drum stand

Teaching Methodology and Philosophy

This guide is written to be taught like a typical classroom course and will be taught with a similar structure, however it is designed to minimize needless work and give effective practice assignments and processes.

Communications and Scheduling

It is of the upmost importance that both Parent/Guardian(s) and Students be in contact with the instructor over the season as being present is critical. As a group activity, missing rehearsal is not only detrimental to one's self but also to the group. Scheduling information will be provided as quickly and diligently as possible, and in return it is expected that absences are accounted for or known about in advance.

Physical and Mental Requirements

Social Expectations and Culture

Get Inspired!

Student and Parental Agreements with the instructor

Grading

Breakdown Participation: 30%

Attendance: 50%

Music Tests: 20%

Responsibility Agreement

Part II

Beginner

Chapter 1

Gotta Start Somewhere

Introduction

This set of lessons is designed to take a someone with no previous music experience up to being able to play what is required for easy to intermediate marching bass drum music. It serves as the foundation for all marching percussion and is a prerequisite for all future levels. It is recommended for middle school and early high school students.

The Beginner Course is divided into two chapters which each have a relevant exercise at the end for students to apply their skills. These are written to be somewhat challenging and serve as good exercises to play in your warm-up sequence.

The Basics of Technique, Music Reading, and Subdivision In this chapter, we will learn the absolute bear minimum of what it takes to play drums. The focus will be on reading music and playing to a tempo, syncing your feet with your playing in a *marktime*, and understanding the 4 stroke types. It will be slow, frustrating, and admittedly pretty boring. These bare-bones skills are things that you will do everyday as they form the fundamental components of marching percussion.

1.1 Hello Drums!

1.1.1 Introduction

1.1.2 Marking Time and The Metronome

What Is time? Before we can even think about playing the drums, we need to learn how to keep time. The way we do this in marching band is with our feet. The synchronised movement not only looks cool, but also makes it easy to know where we are in the music and how fast it is. To practice this, we are going to learn how to **Mark Time**.

Marking Time is what we do to simulate marching when standing still. The idiom "to mark time" is actually fitting to what we use it for.

To idly wait; to do nothing except observe the passage of time.

In its most basic form Marking Time is just walking in place to a tempo; you pick your foot up and put it back down again in time with the music. We are observing the passage of musical time and marking it with a foot placement. If we can all do this together, then we are observing the passage of musical time together.

So how do we know what the tempo is? We need a frame of reference, and this is where the metronome comes in.

Let's Try It! Set the metronome to 120 bpm (beats per minute). Something you may notice about this specific tempo is that it is exactly twice per second. And that makes sense as a minute contains 60 seconds. 120 is double 60, therefore for every second there will be one musical count. This specific tempo highlights that tempo and keeping time is all about **fractions**, which is something to keep in mind for later.

We all hear the clicking at a regular interval. It is perfectly regular in fact, which makes it an excellent set of training wheels for learning to play drums. Clap along with me to the metronome.

Not that hard right? This time we will try again, however part way through, we'll mute the metronome. Keep clapping and see if you can maintain that very same clapping speed.

Not so easy now is it? This is why we practice with a metronome, to teach ourselves how to maintain a tempo. This is also why we mark time! It will act as our metronome on the marching field as it is almost always in sync with our music's written tempo. Let's try marking time to the metronome!

The technique to mark time is very simple, but must be defined so that we all do it the same way. Standing with our feet together pick up your left foot to your ankle bone, then softly stomp your foot back onto the ground flat. The lift of the foot should be just before you put it back down again.

1.1.3 Musical Prerequisites

This simple act of playing to a tempo is the very core of drums. Now that we have established Mark Time, we can start applying it to some real music. Figure 1 shows is going to be our first peice of music. It is very short, one measure long with only one note. Anyone who knows how to read music would chuckle at this but we can learn a whole lot about marching percussion by defining this.

Take a look at Figure 1a.

1.1.4 Playing The Drum For The First Time

1.1.5 8-8-16

1.1.6 8th Note Reading Exercises

1.1.7 Quiz:

1.2 The 4 Stroke Types

1.2.1 Introduction

1.2.2 Accents and Taps

1.2.3 Upstrokes and Downstrokes

1.2.4 2 Accents, 2 Taps

1.2.5 Apply Your Learning

1.3 Subdivisions I: 16th Notes

1.3.1 Introduction

We've learned how to read quarter and 8th notes, so the next logical step is to move down to sixteenth notes. A sixteenth note consists of half an eighth note's worth of space and is denoted by the second flag on its stem. Like eighth notes, these stems can be connected to ease the reading process and even combined with eighth note stems to form cleaner, readable rhythms.

ToDo: Add Image of Single 16th note, a grouping of four, and an example of 16th and eighth notes together

We count sixteenth notes by a similar process to eighth notes, with distinct phonetics on each part of the broken down structure. For sixteenth notes, this is 'e & a' with the 'e' being pronounced like the letter and the 'a' being said as it would be in the word 'father'. Note that the '1' and the '2' are placed in exactly the same place as they would be in an eighth note.

ToDo: add image with eighth notes and sixteenth notes showing the way that the counts line up

1.3.2