March 14, 2016

Greetings, prospective U of A Drumline members!

Callback auditions are only a month away, and we are very excited about the 2016 Razorback Drumline. The "Second-Round" percussion audition materials can be found on the next few pages.

The "Second-Round" percussion audition is by invitation only: All auditionees must have completed Round One auditions.

April 30th, 2016- Final Round Drumline Auditions
9:00-12:00- Auditions Begin
1:00-4:30- Drumline Auditions finalized
5:00-8:00- Front Ensemble Auditions

At approximately 12:00 p.m. we will break for lunch for an hour, and the afternoon will be spent in full ensemble. Students may be asked to play multiple instruments. It is therefore to your advantage to prepare music for multiple instruments.

The Razorback Marching Band is an extremely unique and exciting organization to be involved in at the U of A. Although they require levels of commitment, dedication, and desire far greater than most other activities on campus, the rewards that accompany participation in the drumline are most definitely worth it. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at: cmw048@email.uark.edu

Best,

Cole Williams
Graduate Assistant, Percussion
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Keyboard Technique

Approaching the Keyboard: The general idea for approaching the keyboard is to have a confident stance stemming from correct posture and keyboard height. Clearly defined set positions and mallets up/down will help us achieve a clean and mature look.

Posture: To start off our body should be set around the notes we are about to play with feet shoulder with apart and knees relaxed (nothing drastic, just not “locked”). When a passage extends past the comfortable playing region we use our weight and body position to accommodate the passage. This is all pretty standard posture; there should just be no walking behind the instrument while we are playing. I would prefer that the vibraphones pedal with the Right foot however this is a much smaller detail and there may be some exceptions to this idea.

Keyboard Height: The height of the keyboard should be set so that the forearm is slightly less than parallel to the keyboard. This is to allow maximum relaxation of the forearm, with enough of an angle down to use maximum weight and force from the mallet, wrist, and arm. Naturally this will help make sure that the appropriate area of the mallet strikes the key.

Set Position: The set position will be mallets/implements hovering about an inch above the keyboard with the mallet head/bead set over the notes or zone we are about to play.

Mallets Up: In any performance scenario we will start with our arms at our sides completely relaxed. Once each player is in this position the center player will look around see that everyone is ready then bring his mallets up. Using peripheral vision the moment the center moves everyone will initiate the mallets up. Mallets will come up to the set position. This is to achieve a uniformed look and to display that everyone is ready. This is just a general rule for most performance scenarios and can be altered at anytime to accommodate different requirements.

Mallets Down: Mallets down in rehearsal situations will be on cue of the center player. For performance scenarios it will be defined on a situation-to-situation basis.

Preps: In certain situations we will use preps to “tap ourselves off”. One person will give two preps followed by the group giving two preps prior to an entrance. The two preps will be a down-up-down-up sequence and on the second “up” the ensemble will lift their mallets to “playing position.”
Two-Mallet

**Whole Hand Fulcrum:** The two-mallet approach will be referred to as a “whole hand” fulcrum. Through performance and teaching I have learned that both “front” and “rear” fulcrums should be utilized depending on the passage being played. “Whole Hand” fulcrum is a combination of the two techniques so that benefits from both techniques can be used.

**Holding the Mallet:** Looking at the mallet visually divide it into thirds. The third farthest from the mallet head should be placed in the center of your hand. There should be about an inch of shaft running out the bottom of your hand.

**Fulcrum:** The fulcrum starts in the rear of the hand and progresses forward as tempo increases. If a certain color is desired this rule can be disregarded. I will define the fulcrums starting with the rear.

**Rear Fulcrum:** When playing rear fulcrum passages you will grip the mallet with the back three fingers (middle, ring, and pinky). Your thumb and forefingers should be on the third division of the mallet. Be sure the shaft of the mallet runs along the first knuckle of the forefinger. The thumb and forefinger should line up to help guide the mallet and to later be used as a second fulcrum. Imagine there were a nail driven through the top of the thumb and out the first knuckle of the forefinger. This should stay intact at all times. This hand position will naturally create a space between the forefinger and middle finger. Unlike most rear fulcrum techniques I would like to keep this space on the small side, consult the images below for a clearer understanding.

**Middle Fulcrum:** The middle fulcrum is not utilized in the same manner as the rear and front fulcrum. It could be considered more as a tool to help control articulation for both the front and rear fulcrums. Moments where increased articulation is required we utilize this fulcrum by increasing pressure with the middle and ring fingers. Now obviously this is a speed limiting technique. We can utilize this technique at slower tempi and even into lower-mid range tempi. Once we get to a general middle tempo we can start to release some of the rear pressure on the shaft by relaxing the pinky. The pinky should never leave the shaft and appear stuck out. Even when the pinky is relaxed it should remain on the stick. Now it’s understood that the idea of this “middle” fulcrum has a lot of “grey area”, but it will mainly be addressed on a situation-to-situation basis. You will be told when to use it. This is something that will not be expected during the audition process but will be implemented at certain points during the summer. A strong understanding of this fulcrum is one key factor in creating the type of sound we are looking for. It brings a new, fresh, darker sound to the keyboard.

**Front Fulcrum:** The front fulcrum is what allows us to play extremely fast, articulate passages. Unlike most east-coast approaches our front fulcrum approach does not disregard the weight of the arm. It simply allows us an addition resource for controlling articulation. While playing front fulcrum passages the rear fingers are relaxed and
Two Mallet Warm-Ups

Lockjaw

\( \text{j} = 120 \)

Waffle House

\( \text{j} = 168 \)

Variation I

Variation II

Variation III

Variation IV

Tag
Four-Mallet

Grip:

The following process is the same for both hands.

First, grip a mallet with your pinky and ring finger. The pinky is our “anchor” and must wrap all the way around the mallet providing the foundation for the grip. There should be minimal excess mallet protruding from the bottom of your pinky. The outer mallet should go up at a 45-degree angle in relationship to the forearm. This will ensure the mallets will hang evenly when the inner mallet is added to the grip. There is a delicate balance between gripping too tightly with the pinky and letting your outside mallet droop down.

Second, place the other mallet in the palm of your hand just under your thumb muscle. Your middle finger is holding the mallet into your palm/thumb muscle with the fingertip. Your index finger acts as a shelf for the inside mallet and the mallet should be able to rest without any pressure in your hand. At the interval of a fifth, the index fingers will be pointing at each other, not curling in towards you. Stay relaxed at all times.

Finally, place your thumb on the inside mallet directly over the first knuckle of your index finger. The thumb rests on top of the mallet and applies only the minimal amount of pressure to keep it in place. The thumb contacts the mallet with the fleshy part of the thumb, not the tip of the thumb NO BENT THUMBS! This will allow you to freely change intervals as well as maintain a relaxed grip.

Four-Mallet Articulation: Just like with two-mallet articulation, we control the sound with our fulcrums. For the outside mallets we add slight pressure with our pinky finger and also a slight amount of pressure between our ring and middle finger. Inside mallet articulation is controlled just like front fulcrum articulation, added pressure between the thumb and forefinger.

REMEMBER, ADDED PRESSURE DOES NOT MEAN PINCHING THE STICK!!
Even when we add pressure to increase articulation we want the shaft to vibrate to ensure an open sound.
Four-Mallet Stroke Types

There are three stroke types that we will use with the Stevens technique:

1. Wrist strokes
2. Twist strokes
3. Wrist Twist strokes

1. Wrist Strokes
Double Vertical: This stroke should be played primarily with the wrist. The thumbs will remain on top of the grip the entire time. Never turn the hand flat as in our 2 mallet grip regardless of difficult intervals (major seconds, etc). Both mallets must remain parallel to the key board at all times to eliminate flanging of the mallets. This movement will cause the wrist to look like it momentarily pops up when the mallets hit the keys. This wrist pop should NOT be exaggerated; it is a natural result of performing the stroke correctly with the wrist. Gradually, we will learn to incorporate the arm into the stroke. The mallets should travel straight up and down without any side-to-side motion. Make sure to keep your fingers relaxed and the speed of the stroke fluid and consistent.

2. Twist Strokes:
Single Independent: We will primarily be using this stroke type for mallets 2 and 3 (the inside mallets). We will define this stroke as a “twist” movement to refer to the unique muscle movement required to execute this stroke correctly. The playing position will be achieved by rotating the "active" around the unused mallet (i.e.: mallet 3 will rotated around mallet 4). In order to develop independence, in this case, with the inside mallets, it is important to keep the outer mallets as still as possible. The outer will be defined as being half the height of the playing position. In order to achieve this DON'T USE ANY TENSION!! Relaxed fingers act as shock absorbers-tension will cause the outer mallets to twitch vertically and/or horizontally. Make sure that you keep your index finger and thumb firm, but relaxed. This will help to keep control of the inside mallets.

Single Alternating: This stroke type is closely related with the Single Independent stroke, but without concern for motion in the other mallet. The set position and playing position are the same as in the Double Vertical stroke. As one mallet strikes the bar, the other mallet will raise in response much like a pendulum transferring its momentum. Be sure to not simply rotate the wrist: instead, think of the pivot point as bouncing from one mallet to the next. This will allow us to control the articulation, rhythm and dynamic of each mallet. It is important to note that TEMPO is a major determining factor for when a Single Alternating stroke TURNS INTO a one-handed roll motion. As the tempo increases, the ability to control each mallet will decrease, until the motion is solely a rotation of the wrist.
3. Wrist-Twist Strokes:

**Double Lateral:** Double Lateral strokes should not operate like the other 2 stroke types. The goal here is to use ONE hand motion (wrist) to produce TWO strokes (twist). Again, the set position and playing position are the same as a Double Vertical stroke. The upstroke is initiated in the same manner as a Double Vertical. On the way down the wrist is twisted so that the outer mallet strikes the key first. The torque from rebounding the outside mallet will naturally cause the inside mallet to strike the key. The inside mallet should then rebound back to the top of the stroke. Simply, the stroke is initiated by a wrist motion and finished by a twist motion.
Four-Mallet Warm-ups
Four-Mallet Warm-Ups

La Ritournelle

\[ \text{\( \dot{\text{J}} = 140 \)} \]

Be prepared to play using any permutation (1234, 1324, 1243 etc...)

Min-Max

\[ \text{\( \dot{\text{J}} = 100 \)} \]

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