



Pride Of The West

West Forsyth High School Bands

4155 Drew Road
Cumming, GA 30040
(770) 888-3470

Welcome to 8th Grade Night! We are very excited that you have chosen to come and learn about the Pride of the West Marching Band. In this packet you will find information about the drumline, our upcoming ChopShop, playing technique, and copies of several of the exercises you will hear the drumline play tonight (and hopefully you'll join in with us!).

Composition of the ensemble

There are two basic components to a marching band drumline: the front ensemble and the battery.

The front ensemble, or pit, is the group of performers who play the concert instruments, including marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, bells, tympani, etc., and are positioned off the front sideline; the pit is the section of the drumline that brings melodic elements to the show. Members of the pit must master the basics of the match grip technique, plus specific techniques related to each concert instrument and scales. The scales you will need to know are: D, G, C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, and Db.

The battery is the marching portion of the drumline which includes the marching snare, tenor, and bass drums; this is the portion of the ensemble for players who have more of a rudimental focus in their playing. Typically, the battery is responsible for maintaining the tempo for the rest of the band, which is a big responsibility just ask any member of this year's battery! The tenors and bass drums play match grip, while the snares play traditional grip. First year members need to focus on match grip, you will find details on learning the match grip in this packet.

All members of the drumline need to know each of the three exercises included in the packet. When you are learning these exercises, the easiest way to start is by reading the snare part. If you have aspirations to play tenors or bass drum, please check out those parts in the music. The pit takes the exercises and applies them to their instruments, so knowing the rhythm of the exercise is the critical starting point.

ChopShop

We will begin weekly practices in November after football season ends. The goal of these practices is to improve the technique of our current members and to teach the technique to new members. The ChopShop will continue through the Spring Semester and will culminate with drumline tryouts May 2009. Participation in the ChopShop is not mandatory, but your participation will greatly increase your technique and skills and therefore will increase the likelihood of you playing the instrument of your dreams.

The ChopShop will open immediately afterschool, so you should plan on having your parents bring you to West as soon as you are dismissed from middle school. More details on the schedule for the ChopShop will be posted on our website (www.wfhsband.com) and sent to your band directors in the coming weeks.

Again, thanks for coming out tonight and we look forward to seeing you at the ChopShop!

If you have any questions about the WFHS Pride of the West Marching Band drumline, please feel free to contact me directly.

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Drumline Expectations and Technique Information

Expectations

1. Each performer will come to practice mentally and physically ready to practice
2. Each performer will come to practice with the necessary equipment
3. Each performer will dedicate 15-30 minutes daily to individual practice
4. Each performer commits to having a good time at rehearsal making music with the ensemble

Equipment

Each performer will need to bring the following items to each and every practice:

- Vic Firth Tom Aungst drumsticks (wood tip); sticks should always be taped white with no imperfections visible at the beginning of practice
- 2 inch 3-ring binder with binder clips and page protectors
- Pencil/pen
- Ear plugs
- Rubber coated practice pad (for home use and we will be using these at selected rehearsals)

Each performer also needs to have a metronome for use during at-home practice.

Height System

Varied stick heights are used to create dynamics in the music and we will be utilizing the full range of dynamics in our music, so it is absolutely required that each performer master the stick heights. Mastery of the stick heights will come through many hours of practice at home in front of a mirror and rehearsal with the ensemble. When you are practicing at home, you should use a ruler to establish the correct heights and then to check yourself during practice.

Dynamic marking

Stick height

<i>p</i>	3"
<i>mp</i>	6"
<i>mf</i>	9"
<i>f</i>	12"
<i>ff</i>	15"
<i>fff</i>	90°

Approaching the Drum

The approach is generally quite relaxed from the shoulders all the way down your arms with the tensest portion being your fingers which are grasping the stick/mallet. We will be gripping our sticks and mallets firmly, but

without pinching down on the sticks/mallets with a lot of tension. Arms are held in natural, relaxed positions close to the body.

Match Grip

All members of the ensemble ***must*** be proficient with match grip. All instruments can be played with this technique, so it is, by far, the most versatile grip. Steps to excellent match grip:

1. Grasp the sticks/mallets by placing your thumb at the natural fulcrum point of the implement and wrapping your fingers around the stick/mallet. For sticks, the fulcrum is roughly 1/3 of the way up from the butt of the stick. The fulcrum point will be closer to the butt end on a mallet due to the weight coming from the head on the mallet.
2. Firmly grasp the stick with all fingers and your thumb. Do not tense up and place the stick in a death grip. Your grip should be firm but relaxed with a little “play” in your grip of the stick. Also, you may have a small gap between your thumb and first finger; you should not force the gap to close, remember...relax!
3. Now, let's focus on the actual fulcrum point. With this more relaxed grip the fulcrum point will be maintained between your thumb and second finger. As you begin to play with this grip, you will likely find your first index finger will naturally come off the stick (don't let it wander too far though, you still need it). Moving the fulcrum back one finger also allows you have a more relaxed grip while achieving a fuller quality of sound and higher stick heights (*every band director's dream, louder drummers!!*).
4. With your sticks correctly gripped let's move to the drum. Let's set your arm position. Just like your hands, your arms should be in the correct position and relaxed. Begin with your arms at your side, parallel to your body. Then move your sticks by rotating your elbows (*Elbows only! No upper arm motion!*) to bring your forearms up so they are parallel to or at a slight angle downward to the drum. Keep your elbows in close to your body and keep everything relaxed from the shoulders down.
5. When your sticks are in playing position, the beads of the sticks should be together in the center of the head, sticks apart at a 70-80° angle, and sticks 1 inch about the head/playing surface. You are going to freeze the sticks in this position when you are not playing; it is still a relaxed state, so freeze but don't lock up.
6. Now it is time to play...We will be playing with vertical strokes (from the playing surface), so use a mirror (or look down) to check your angle of attack. If you deviate from vertical you are slicing your stroke, which will change your quality of sound. We are looking for a full, rich sound so slicing is definitely not what we are looking for!
7. Most of the stokes will be played with wrist. Certain stickings/rudiments require use of the fingers and we will use arm to add additional weight to select passages. Make sure to primarily use wrist, but do not lock out your forearms in the process (think relaxed and flow).
8. As you are playing, some things to think about: (1) you are musician, who is (2) playing in a musical ensemble (2), so think and play accordingly. We are not hitting the drums or calling an army to war, we need to play within the context of the written music and the ensemble.

8-8-16

Battery

Covert

The purpose of this exercise is to warm up and stretch out your muscles. We usually begin playing this at full vertical stroke between 90 and 100 beats per minute. We then move into variations where we play at different heights (3", 6", 9", 12") and with musical phrasing (crescendo and decrescendo). This is a very loose exercise at all tempos, primarily focusing your fingers and wrists.

Musical notation for the first system, measures 1-4. The Snare and Tenor parts are in 4/4 time and feature a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Bass part features a quarter-note pattern. Handing is indicated by 'R' and 'L' labels below the staff lines.

Musical notation for the second system, measures 5-8. The Snare part alternates between left and right hands. The Tenor part continues with eighth notes. The Bass part continues with quarter notes.

Musical notation for the third system, measures 9-12. The Snare and Tenor parts feature a specific rhythmic pattern labeled 'R L R L'. The Snare part ends with a final note and a fermata. The Tenor part also ends with a final note and a fermata. The Bass part continues with quarter notes.

Diddles and rolls breakdown

This exercise is designed to focus your attention on the rhythm found in diddle and roll passages. Begin practicing this exercise between 100 & 120 bpm stroking each note with your wrist. As the tempo increases, transition to wrist and fingers. Do not play this exercise higher than 6 inches.

Snare

4/4

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

Tenor

4/4

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

Bass

4/4

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

4

S

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

T

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

B

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

7

S

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

T

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

B

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

Diddles and rolls breakdown

2
10

S
R L L R R L R L L R R L R L R L R L R L R R L L R R L L R R L L

T
R L L R R L R L L R R L R L R L R L R L R R L L R R L L R R L L

B
R R L R L R R R L R L R R R R L L L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

13

S
R L R L R L R L R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L R L

T
R L R L R L R L R L R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L R L

B
R L R R L R L R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L

16

S
R R L L R L R L L R R L R L R L R

T
R R L L R L R L L R R L R L R L R

B
R R L R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L

16th Accent

Begin this exercise by playing 9" accents and 3" in taps. Variations include playing different accent heights while maintaining 3" taps and crescendoing and decrescendoing the accents, 4.5", 6", 9", and 12" or 6", 9", 12", and 15", reverse these heights for decrescendo.

The musical score is divided into three sections, each with three measures. The first section is marked with a '3' above the first measure. The second section is marked with a '6' above the first measure. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accents (>), and asterisks (*) for specific drum techniques. The Snare (S) and Tenor (T) parts feature continuous eighth-note patterns with accents. The Bass (B) part features a complex pattern of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, often with asterisks indicating specific techniques. The bottom of each section shows the corresponding drum notation: R for right hand, L for left hand, and asterisks for specific techniques.

16th Accent

2
9

Musical score for measures 2-9. The score is written for Soprano (S), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts. The Soprano part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>) above every fourth note. The Tenor part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>) below every fourth note. The Bass part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>) below every fourth note. The rhythmic notation below the Bass staff is: R L R L (measures 2-3), R R R R L L L L (measures 4-5), and R L R L (measures 6-7).

12

Musical score for measures 10-14. The score is written for Soprano (S), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts. The Soprano part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>>) above every fourth note. The Tenor part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>>) below every fourth note. The Bass part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes with accents (>) below every fourth note. The rhythmic notation below the Bass staff is: R L R R L R R L R L R L (measures 10-11), R R R R L L L L (measures 12-13), and R L R L (measures 14).

15

Musical score for measure 15. The score is written for Soprano (S), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts. The Soprano part has a final note with an accent (>) above it, followed by a fermata. The Tenor part has a final note with an accent (>) below it, followed by a fermata. The Bass part has a final note with an accent (>) below it, followed by a fermata.