

Towels, Trap Tables, and Tambourines:

Tips for a Thriving Percussion Section

Jonathan Latta, DMA

Associate Professor of Practice, University of the Pacific

Helpful Steps to Getting Organized:

Develop regular commitment to part assignments-

Create transparent and clear spreadsheet of information

Regularly look to rotate performers, seek to develop different skills in different students

Maintain discipline in storage and maintenance of percussion instruments

Require students to participate in storage of percussion instruments

Have a collection or well-kept and diverse sticks, mallets, and beaters

Develop thoughtful approach to section collaboration in all aspects of music-making and organization

Provide access to such helpful items as thrones, storage cabinets, and towels

Cymbals

- Grip: like a coffee cup
- Stroke: reinforce with performers
the use of gravity
- Tone: seek a rich tone, one that provides a spectrum of overtones
- Note length: listen to ensemble, study the score

Concert Bass Drum

- Tuned to its lowest point without a rattle
- Use towel in muffling, hand dampening, and taper of the sound
- Beating spots create a range of articulation and timbre
- Rolling is usually slower than one may think

Tambourine

- Work to develop the non-dominant hand- hold the tambourine in the non-dominant hand
- Two types of rolls:
 - Shake roll
 - Thumb (friction) roll
- Knee-Fist technique (need a chair)
- Soft touch playing (need a chair)

Triangle

- Take assessment of the equipment
- Quality triangle (possibly more than one size and make/model)
- Range of beaters (do you have any pairs of beaters?)
- Quality clips (purchased or homemade)
- Once the essentials are in place, encourage performers to explore timbre variations
- Help students find the confidence in playing, have them hold the triangle high
- Clips are for more than holding it in the hand, also to mount when needed to play in multiple set-up or in playing in a rapid, repeated fashion

Timpani

- Work to make sure your timpani remain in the proper range for each drum and that the heads remain clear (clear= in tune with itself and each lug equally tuned)
- Have a collection of mallets to present both a soft (legato) playing experience and hard (staccato) playing experience
- Reinforce the use of a beating spot that creates the fullest range of overtones
- Help ensure proper ergonomic approach to the timpani by having a stool available for performers

Percussion Teaching Videos



Dr. Jonathan Latta

Jlatta@pacific.edu

Associate Professor of Practice

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