

# Success in Your Concert Percussion Section

*A presentation by Dr. Jonathan Latta at CASMEC 2026*

## Three Areas of Assessment

### Physical attributes to consider:

- quality triangle clip and collection of beaters
- tambourine with head in good repair and beeswax
- towels for bass drum and trap tables
- bass drum and timpani mallets in good repair
- crash cymbal straps secure and pads

- 1) **Physical:** what is your overall space planning? How are the instruments organized? What is the condition of your instruments?
- 2) **Technical:** are students applying healthy grip and stroke? Are the instruments at the correct height?
- 3) **Musical:** do students engage in each other's parts? Is phrasing and gesture considered in the performance? Are intentional sounds being performed on the instruments?

### Technical attributes to consider:

- heights adjusted (the instrument comes to the student)
- throne for timpani performer
- technique demonstrated with relaxed approach and open fulcrum
- various timpani grips (French and German) and 4-mallet grips (Musser/Stevens, Burton, Traditional/Cross) being shared?

### Musical attributes to consider:

- has the exploration of beating spots been encouraged?
- has the score been consulted for note lengths, character of sound, etc.?
- have a variety of mallets, sticks, and beaters been explored for balance within the section and within the ensemble?
- have towels, mutes and other helpful devices been experienced to create thoughtful sounds and textures?
- have the students written in cues, tuning changes, mallet choices, and other helpful information into their parts?
- has phrasing been explored on instruments not usually

Feel free to connect with questions: [jlatta@pacific.edu](mailto:jlatta@pacific.edu) Also, enjoy these [Percussion Teaching Videos](#)