



## **Developing Your Marching Percussion Section**

**CLINICIANS:**

**Jordan Stern, Kris Hartman**

**DEMONSTRATION GROUP:**

**Claudia Taylor Johnson H S Marching Percussion**

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**Marching Show Concepts**

# **Texas Bandmasters Association 2014 Convention/Clinic**



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**JULY 27-30, 2014**

**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

*Claudia Taylor Johnson High School Band*  
Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic  
July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Band Directors: Jarrett Lipman, Alan Sharps, Jordan Stern

Percussion Director: Kris Hartman

Percussion Technicians: Courtney Kirkwood, Morgan Gutierrez, Bobby Ramirez

Percussion Private Teachers: Manny Maldonado, Kris Hartman, Courtney Kirkwood

Sound and Electronics Consultant: Colton Hines

**An Overview of our Percussion Program**

- 32 percussionists (14 Battery, 16 Front Ensemble including 2 double reed players on soundboard)
  - o Not all percussion students opt to be in the competitive marching band
- Strong emphasis placed on TMEA All-State Audition Process
  - o Daily work on etudes during summer band camp
  - o 2013-2014: Eight Region students, four Area students, two All-State students
  - o Multiple mock auditions
- Percussion Ensemble concert in Spring
- Private Lessons strongly encouraged
- Marching Percussion Arrangements done “in-house”
  - o Battery Composition: Kris Hartman
  - o Front Ensemble Composition: Jordan Stern

**Developing a Culture of Excellence in the Front Ensemble**

- Students take pride in being in the front ensemble
  - o Environment of an elite unit, not just for those who aren’t ready for the battery section
    - Not all guaranteed a position, spots must be earned
  - o Challenging writing/interesting colors/unique identity/risk-taking
- Care/Maintenance of equipment and set-up
  - o “We eat first with our eyes”
  - o Making sure the equipment looks new, even if it isn’t

**Musical Concerns**

**Front Ensemble Instrumentation**

- Four marimbas (two with Mininova synths), four vibraphones (two also play bass/gong impacts), Glock/Crotales, three Yamaha Motif XF6 synthesizers, one Roland electronic drumset, one Yamaha DTX Sampling Pad, one Roland SP-404SX Sampler, two sound board operators
  - o Various auxiliary colors can be covered by mallet players/drum set/sampler

## **Front Ensemble Orchestration**

- The modern front ensemble can create multiple, varied and unique sonic environments throughout the show.
  - o Electronics are invaluable in this regard
  - o If you can dream it, do it
    - Sampler provides virtually unlimited timbral possibilities
- Creating opportunities to feature front ensemble during design process
  - o Opportunities to display virtuosity, musicianship, unique colors
- Never writing technique for the sake of technique, always serving musical purposes
  - o Round peg in square hole

## **Technical Development**

### **Front Ensemble Warm-up and Technical Regimen**

- We employ two types of exercises
  - o Short Technical Exercises
    - Usually deal with one technique or challenge
    - Taught by rote
    - Contain only one part
    - Usually only a few measures long
    - When possible, taken through multiple tonal areas (major, minor, modes, symmetrical scales, etc.)
    - Special emphasis placed on the four stroke types (Full, Down, Tap, Up)
    - Thom Hannum Check Patterns
    - “Component Skills”
  - o Longer Musical Exercises
    - Fully scored with drumset and 3 synth parts
    - Scoring closely mirrors scoring used in marching show
    - Contain fun melodic and groove content
    - Combine multiple technical, musical and rhythmic challenges into one musical example
    - “Composite Skills”
    - Demonstration: “Chicken and Punch,” great opening exercise for regimen. *Sheet music available as a free download at [JordanSternMusic.com](http://JordanSternMusic.com)*
      - Fun groove!
      - Some challenging double stop shifts
      - Double stroke section a great way to loosen up muscles (two wrist strokes needed, instrument does not supply rebound)
- The warm-up process at a performance focuses primarily on the longer, musical exercises, creating a performance mind-set in all that we do.
  - o Engages right brain as opposed to left brain
  - o John Coltrane – “I practice scales so that I can forget them”

### **“Fighting for the last 5 Percent”**

- 95% of preparation is learning the basics
  - o Playing correct bars on the instrument
  - o Playing with a correct stroke (rebounded)
  - o Playing with “approximately” the correct rhythm
  - o Most competitive groups are able to master this 95%
- The “Last 5 Percent” covers details that are difficult to master (similar to All-State band etude prep):
  - o Beating spots
    - Keeping mallet heads side by side, not one in front of the other
    - Not just right notes, right spots on right notes
    - Poor beating spot = wrong note
    - Dead stroke approximation: training muscle memory
  - o Evenness
    - 16<sup>th</sup> Subdivision: Cutting a beat into 4 perfectly equal pieces
    - Main errors: “Swing” and “Anti-Swing”
    - Use Garageband or Logic to record players, show them how they look against the ruler
  - o Accuracy
    - Causes of Accuracy Errors
      - Incorrect shifting
        - o Stevens’ “Kung-Fu” Shifting
      - Standing at the incorrect position on the instrument
      - Stroke height too high
- Demonstration: “Escalator” *Sheet music available as a free download at [JordanSternMusic.com](http://JordanSternMusic.com)*
  - o Covers all 12 tonal areas without stopping
  - o Deals with challenge of maintaining uniform mallet height (6 inches) through rhythmic shifts containing 8<sup>th</sup> notes, 8<sup>th</sup> note triplets and 16<sup>th</sup> notes
- Mallet Selection
  - o It is very useful to have a wide variety of mallets to choose from
    - Try to avoid being “mono-chromatic”

### **Four-Mallet Mastery**

- The bar has been raised significantly in the past 10 years; what once were college level marimba solos are now routinely played (and often played very well!) by high school students (and sometimes even middle school students!)
- Early exposure to extreme technical demands with 4 mallets can create undesirable habits if left unchecked
  - o Too much tension, especially in outer mallets/4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> fingers
  - o Lowercase “t” as opposed to Capital T between thumb and forefinger
  - o Lack of proper rotation
- *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens remains the definitive guide for proper four-mallet technique using the Stevens technique
- Pay special attention to the following:
  - o Hands should stay physically soft

- You should be able to pull a players mallet away with little resistance from the grip
    - Mallets should simply “hang” in the hand
  - Make sure shifts are efficient (combine rebound from one note to the shift to the next)
  - Eliminate unnecessary foot shifts
- **Demonstration:** “Avocado”
  - This exercise uses all of the four-mallet stroke types (Double Vertical, Single Alternating, Single Independent, Double Lateral)

### **So many possibilities...**

- There are many variations in taste, writing, set up, instrumentation, etc., when it comes to front ensemble
- Your approach should be based on what fits your style as a band program
  - It is ideal to adapt your technique regimen to fit this identity

## **Effective Battery Warm-Up Efficiency**

### **Sixteen on a Hand**

- Initiation and Approach
- Stroke Style
- Tone Quality and Resonance
- Height, Velocities and Volume

### **Bucks in 2 and Bucks in 3 with Variations**

- Physics of 2 Height
- Differences between Bucks in 2 and Variation
- Syncopation
- Constant Motion
  - Applying all *Sixteen on a Hand* properties

### **Sixteenth Note and Triplet Accent Grids**

- Understanding of Accent Relationship to Meter and Time
- Transitions from Accent Pattern
  - Applying all *Sixteen on a Hand* and *Bucks* Properties

### **Legos**

- Automatic Application of all Prior Exercises
- Addition of Different Techniques
  - Arm
  - Fingers
- Metric Changes
  - Hand Speed
  - Energy
  - Patience

## **The Break Down**

- *Sixteenth Note and Triplet Timing Grids*
  - o Understanding of Moving Space throughout the Meters
  - o Stroke Style Relation
  - o Constant Motion
- *Double Triple (Sanford)*
  - o Quality of Double and Triple Beats
  - o Management of Hand Speed
  - o Chop Building
- *Diddle Builder (Gallop)*
  - o Applying Philosophies of *Double Triple* to Hand-to-Hand
  - o Constant Motion
  - o Hand Speed

***\* The ultimate goal of our exercise packet is to be performed through a relaxed state at all times. Energy shifts do NOT mean tension.***

## ***Battery Stick and Head Selection***

### **Snares**

- Innovative Percussion Ike Jackson Model Snare Sticks (FS-IJ)
- Evans Hybrid Grey batter heads
- Evans MX-5 Gold snare side heads

### **Tenors**

- Innovative Percussion Tim Jackson Model #2 (TS-TJ2)
- Evans EC2S Marching Heads

### **Basses**

- Innovative Percussion FBX 1-5 Mallets
- Evans MX-1 Marching Heads

## ***Front Ensemble Mallet Selection***

### **Marimbas**

- Innovative Percussion Field Series FS 150X (Our go-to mallet)
- Innovative Percussion Tom Rarick Series IP 3002, 3003, 3004
- Innovative Percussion Jim Casella Series IP 1001, 1002, 1003, 1003X
- Innovative Percussion Robin Engelman Series IP 702, 704, 706

### **Vibraphones**

- Innovative Percussion Jim Casella Series IP 1004, 1005 (Our go-to mallet), 1006
- Innovative Percussion Tom Rarick Series IP 3006, 3007
- Innovative Percussion Anders Åstrand Series AA25H

### **Glockenspiel and Crotales**

- Innovative Percussion Orchestral Series OS-1, OS-2, OS-3, OS-4, OS-5, OS-6, OS-7
- Innovative Percussion James Ross Series IP 901, 902, 903, 904, 906
- Innovative Percussion Ensemble Series Aluminum ENS 760R

## ***Special Thanks to:***

- Innovative Percussion and Evans for all your support

# Chicken and Punch

Jordan Stern

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f* *To Coda*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

Mallets

*f*

*D.C. al Coda*

CODA

Mallets

*f*

# Escalator

Jordan Stern

Mallets

F Major

*f*

Mallets

C Major

Mallets

G Major

Mallets

D Major

Mallets

A Major

Mallets

E Major

Mallets

B Major

Mallets

F Sharp Major

Mallets

D Flat Major

Mallets

A Flat Major

Mallets

E Flat Major

Mallets

B Flat Major

Mallets

Tag

Swing 8ths

The score consists of 13 staves, each representing a different key signature for the mallets. The keys are: F Major, C Major, G Major, D Major, A Major, E Major, B Major, F Sharp Major, D Flat Major, A Flat Major, E Flat Major, B Flat Major, and a Tag section. The music is written in 4/4 time, with a key signature change to 5/4 for the final two measures of each staff. The first staff is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece features a consistent eighth-note rhythmic pattern with triplet accents. The tag section is marked 'Swing 8ths' and concludes with a final measure.



# Avocado

Jordan Stern

Mallets

*f* *To Coda*

Mallets

Mallets

1 2 4 3 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 2 4 3

Mallets

1 2 3 4 1 3 2 4

Mallets

3 2 3 2

Mallets

3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 2

Mallets

*D.C. al Coda*

Mallets

*rit.*

# Legos

Snare Drum  
f R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L

Quint Toms  
f R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L

Bass Drums  
f R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L

S.Dr.  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L

Quints  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L

B. Dr.  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R L L L L L L

S.Dr.  
R R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R R R R L L L L L R R R R R L L L L L

Quints  
R R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R R R R L L L L L R R R R R L L L L L

B. Dr.  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R

S.Dr.  
R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R

Quints  
R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R

B. Dr.  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L

S.Dr.  
L L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R L

Quints  
L L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R L

B. Dr.  
R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L

