



# Erie All-City Marching Band Percussion



## Pit Ensemble: Mallets

In this packet you will find the exercises and techniques used in our pit ensemble.

This packet belongs to:

Erie All-City Marching Band

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## Music

**Music** is what ultimately gave us our beginning, our passion, our drive to bring us to this activity. The styles of music we play here at Erie All-City Marching Band is what defines us. Just as it is important to practice our music and learn to play in these styles, it is also good to be a **good music listener**. Broadening your musical library to include many genres will in turn help you play in a those styles and maybe even relate your parts better with others. So whether you have played a percussion instrument your whole life or if this is your first time ever holding a stick, we hope to teach you to be a better percussionist but first and foremost, a better musician.

## Dynamics

Each dynamic in the music will have a corresponding height to go with it. These heights are how we will define each volume and will be exact for most of the program. It is important that we all play the same exact heights in order to play together **consistently**. However, it is important that as a musician you are flexible enough to adjust as all of the heights listed below will not be perfect for every situation encountered in the music.

### Ex. Definition of Stick Heights & Dynamics would be:

3 inches      6 inches      9 inches      12 inches      15 inches

*p*              *mp*              *mf*              *f*              *ff*

## Timing

**This is a percussion program and timing is a very important part of what we do.** Our role in the whole musical ensemble and the integrity of our rhythms rely very much on timing. Learning your rhythms and learning them **CORRECTLY** is very important. Slower is always better than faster when it comes to practicing. Never move onto a faster tempo until you can play everything with the proper relaxed technique at slower tempos. Practice with a metronome to focus on your timing and the accuracy of your rhythms. With correct rhythms in place, we can then worry about right notes.

Also, another option would be to play exercises along with your favorite songs. It's like playing with a metronome but a little more comfortable and appealing than listening to a constant beep. It even creates a musical context for you to relate your parts to. This is exactly what we do when we play together as ensemble. Don't be afraid to **groove** and have **fun** with the music. Then, you can apply that to your music. You should find a groove to your music even when the music is abstract. All music has checkpoints you can use to find a 'pocket' for you to play in.



## Rehearsal Guidelines

In Marching Band, rehearsal time is VERY limited. It is imperative that we maximize this time as much as possible by being prepared for rehearsal 100% of the time. We will work hard but we will also work smart in order to put out the most consistently excellent product that we possibly can every performance.

\*The first part of being prepared for rehearsal is personal preparation at home. You WILL be expected to show up every rehearsal prepared with what is asked of you.

\*The second part of being prepared for rehearsals is coming with a good attitude and ready to drum from the first minute of rehearsal to the last. Part of this is arriving to all rehearsals ON TIME.

\*Lastly, make sure you have everything you need for rehearsals with you at all times. Some of the items necessary for all music rehearsals are:

- |           |               |  |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| -Pencil   | -Highlighter  | -3-ring binder w/all music and exercises |
| -Sneakers | -Water bottle | -Sticks and/or mallets                   |

There are three positions where the mallets shall be during a rehearsal setting described below. We do not have our own parade rest, attention, etc., so these positions will serve in place for uniformity and etiquette.

### Rest Position

Mallets are resting comfortably down at your side. This is like our parade rest position.

### Set Position

Mallets are resting approximately one inch above the resonator of the keyboard, one inch above the drum for timpani players. Synthesizers should have their hands on the keyboard ready to play just like auxiliary percussion should be in a set position over the first instrument being used.

### Up Position

Mallets are at the designated height ready to play. This position will happen at the end of the prep motion. Sometimes, you will be asked to start in this position.

### Cell Phones\*

I understand that just about everyone has a cell phone. I do not mind if you have your cell phone out to keep track of time, **BUT** it must be kept on silent and you should **NOT be TEXTING!** If having your cell phone becomes a distraction, we will all (including myself) be putting our phones in a box during rehearsal time for the remainder of the season.



## Keyboard Technique Guidelines

### Posture

The way we stand behind our instruments not only sets us up to be successful players, but it also creates an atmosphere of professionalism to the viewer/listener. Remember, before you play your first note, you are judged on the way you look behind the instrument.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Your legs and shoulders should be relaxed and your torso should be upright, not hunched over the instrument. The space between your torso and the instrument will be determined by the music you're playing. Generally, though, you want to stand where both manuals are easily reachable. Many people will stand where their arms are totally relaxed while playing the naturals but then have to lunge or hyperextend their arms to reach the accidentals. In actuality, neither manual will be at the perfect distance; it is a compromise. You shift your body weight forward or backward depending on which manual you are using (or which one you're using most).

**Note:** While standing with your feet shoulder width apart, place one foot slightly more forward than the other. This will give you greater balance as you lean or shift your weight forward and back.

### Instrument Height and Arm Placement

To determine if you are playing on a properly adjusted instrument, let your arms hang down at your side. When your shoulders are completely relaxed, bring the hands up and set them, palms down, on the instrument as though you were setting them on a table. While remaining relaxed, look at the angle of your arms. The forearm should be slightly below level, around 20 degrees. If the arm angles down too much, you need to raise your instrument. If your arm is completely level or is angled up, you need to lower it. Keep in mind that unless your shoulders are relaxed while you do this, you will not be setting the instrument correctly.

### Mallet Placement

Whenever possible, we strive to play every note directly over the resonator. While there are many schools of thought on this, for our purposes in an outdoor environment, we believe the best tone (and the most tone) can be achieved and projected the farthest by playing directly in the center of the bar. This will often necessitate playing with both mallets immediately side by side.

### Prep Stroke

This is how we "tap ourselves off." One person will give 2 preps on beats one and two (or the and counts of those beats) then the rest of the ensemble will prep beats 3 and 4 (or the and counts of those beats). Slower tempos will be prepped with "and" counts while faster tempos will be prepped on the strong beats.

## Two-Mallet Technique

### Grip

Our 2-mallet grip is best characterized as a "rear fulcrum" grip. The mallet is held primarily by the rear three fingers. This requires you to move the mallet by wrist turn rather than trying to use your fingers.

With about 1.5 to 2 inches extending from the back of the hand, wrap the three rear fingers around the shaft of the mallet. Then lightly place the remaining two fingers on the shaft with the index



finger slightly extended. The three rear fingers are there to hold on to the mallet. The index finger and thumb are there to “guide” the mallet. Do not squeeze the front of the mallet. The hand should not be flat (palms down) but rather should be turned inward at a slight angle (American Grip). The wrist and arms should form a natural angle that puts no stress on the wrist joint.



## Stroke

From a resting position about a half-inch above the bar, the motion is initiated by the head of the mallet, followed by the wrist and arm in a seamless and fluid motion. The mallet head should move straight up, not in or away from the body (and, of course, not from side to side). Upon reaching the apex of the stroke, the mallet is brought down by the weight in the back of the hand (where the three rear fingers are holding the mallet). As the mallet comes down, the wrist turns to accelerate the mallet head into the bar. The mallet should be completely level as it strikes the exact center of the bar. After contact is made, the looseness of the front of the grip allows the mallet head to immediately rebound, and again the mallet head is leading the hand and arm on the way up.

At a moderate tempo, the stroke is 90% wrist motion and 10% arm motion. As the tempo increases, the stroke will become more wrist-oriented and the mallets will stay lower to the bar. As the tempo decreases, the stroke will become more arm-oriented, and the mallets will come higher off the bar.

## Rebound & the Piston Stroke

When playing with two mallets, the mallets will always come back up to height played. At slow tempos, you will notice that there will be a time where both hands will pause in the up position between strokes. As the tempo increases, the time for the mallets to pause will decrease and the motion will seem fluid.

# 4-Mallet Technique

## Grip

Here, we use the standard Stevens grip when playing with four mallets. With the hand turned sideways in a “handshaking” position, the outside mallet is gripped with the bottom two fingers with no more than a half-inch extending beyond the back of the hand. The inside mallet is balanced between the center of the palm and the curled-in index finger. The middle finger secures the mallet in the palm, while the thumb rests on top of the index finger.

First grip a mallet with your pinky and ring finger. There should be minimal excess mallet protruding from the bottom of your pinky. Second place the back of another mallet in the palm of your



hand just under your thumb muscle. Your middle finger is holding the mallet into your palm/thumb muscle. Your pointer finger acts as a perch for the inside mallet (2 or 3) and the mallet should be able to rest without any pressure in your hand. Finally place your thumb on the inside mallet (2 or 3) directly over your pointer finger perch. This will allow you to freely change intervals.



### **A few common problems regarding 4-mallet grip...**

- Keep your hands turned on their sides. The angle of the hand is very different from the 2-mallet technique, but it is very common to confuse the two.
- No pinching, please. Only squeeze the fingers enough to keep the mallets from flying out of your hands and across the room. Believe it or not, squeezing your fingers employs muscles in your shoulders. That transference of tension can quickly hamper your ability to play quickly and with a relaxed approach.
- Keep the thumb and index finger across from each other. Don't over-curl the index finger or pull back with the thumb. This "locks" the mallets in place and prevents quick interval changes and good tone production. (It also leads to tension in the hands. See "No pinching, please" above.)

### **Stroke**

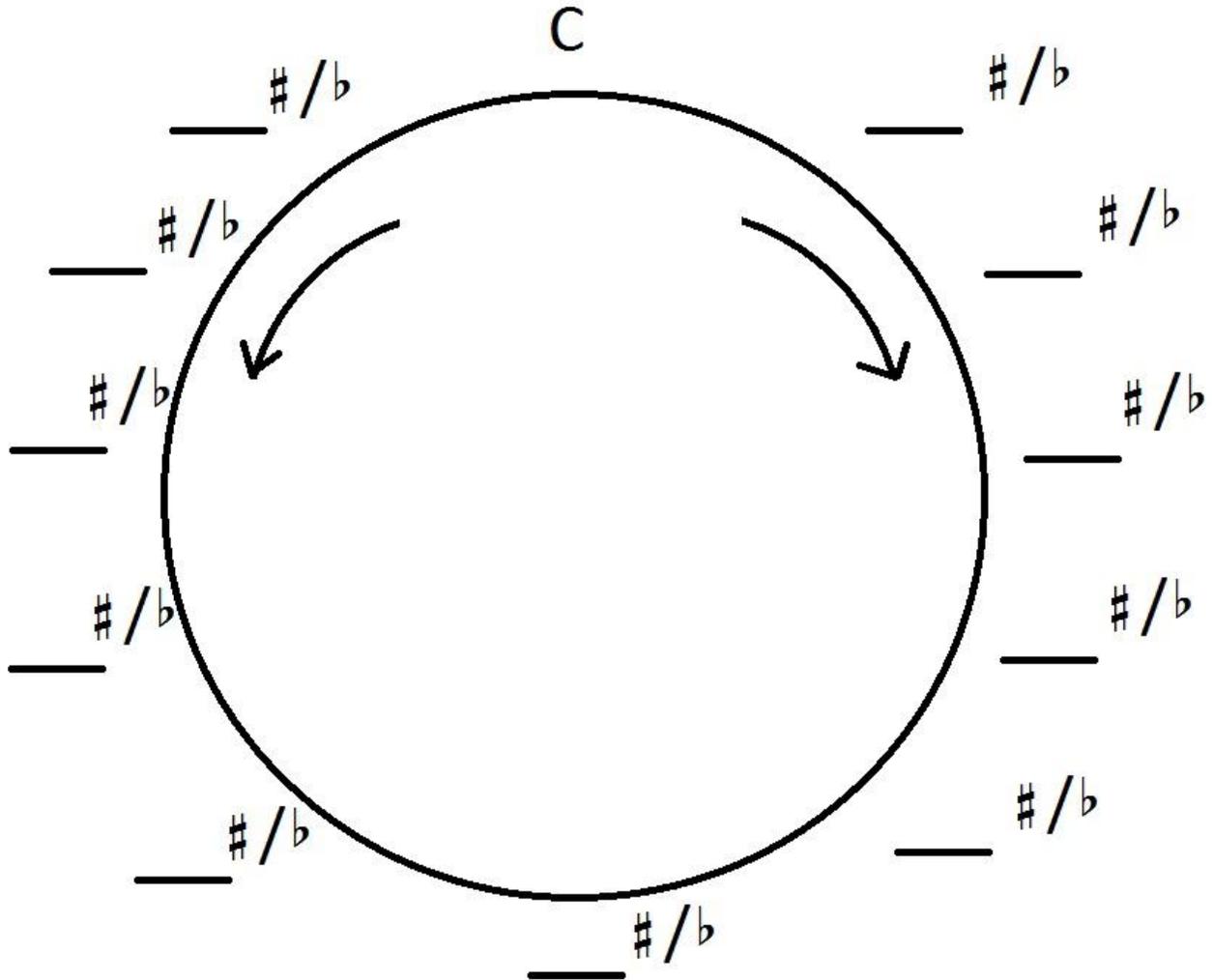
For the purposes of building strength and flexibility, all exercises in this packet should be learned first using only the wrist. Arm motion should only be incorporated once sufficient wrist strength has been achieved. Prior to the stroke, all four mallets are lifted simultaneously by turning the wrist upward.

With this stroke, it is very important for you to be aware of the type of pain you may feel while practicing. Burning-muscle pain is good! It means you are working your muscles out as if lifting weights. If you feel a sharp pain anywhere, STOP! You may be doing something wrong that can be terrible in the long run. Wait until the next rehearsal to consult with the instructor to see what may be wrong.



### Circle of \_\_\_\_\_ 4ths and 5ths

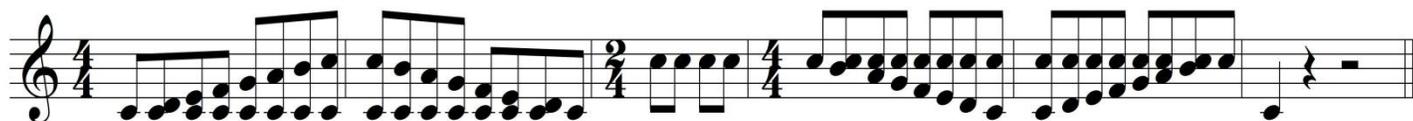
For the following exercises, we will need to learn all 12 major scales. We will be learning them using the circle diagram below. Please fill in the blanks as we learn the scales and use this as a reference.



Use this space below for extra notes:



## Lockjaw



### Guidelines (also played with single independent strokes)

1. Lockjaw is designed to develop your shifting awareness. There are approximately 5 points where the mallets should shift up or down at large intervals
2. Mallets should be resting over Middle C and D to prepare for the exercise.
3. The stroke heights that will be played are full, 12", 9", 6", and 3"
4. While playing this exercise keep in mind that the stroke that you play needs to spring back to where it started from. i.e. this means that however hard you strike the instrument you need to bring the mallet back up at the same velocity.
5. Our goal with playing any note is to create one motion that will then eliminate the variable of pulling back up to strike the next note.
6. Look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> measure 4<sup>th</sup> beat. As the right hand strikes D it should shift up to the C above middle directly after to prepare for the next measure. As this is happening the left hand is striking middle C on the & of 4. After this happens the left hand should shift up to the B above middle C to prepare for the next measure.
7. Look at the 4<sup>th</sup> measure. As the left hand strikes the B above middle C it should shift downward to middle C to prepare to strike the last note. As the left hand strikes the C above middle C it should then shift downward back over the D above middle C where the exercise began.



## 59

The musical notation for exercise 59 is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains two measures of music, and the second staff contains three measures of music, starting with a triplet of eighth notes.

## Guidelines (also played with single independent strokes)

1. This exercise is designed to develop your ability to play through various scale patterns. Throughout the show you will see many different “runs” and patterns that are based off of scales. Being able to play through this exercise at a high level at many different tempos will make playing show music that much easier
2. Mallets should be resting over the tonic note that we start
3. At slow tempos accidentals will be played over the resonator. At faster tempos accidentals will be played at the very edge of the bar.
4. Be sure not to accent with your dominant hand. Every stroke needs to be even and create the same sound throughout the exercise. Every stroke should match in height and velocity.



## The 4-Chord-Song

Songs these days are based off a list of chords that happen normally within a scale. Below are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the chords. Write the notes above them to complete the chord. Then below, write the Roman numeral that shows the chords' correct qualities (Major, Minor, Diminished).

<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

In the 4-Chord-Song Warm up, we are going to use these chords: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_. These 4 chords are used in a variety of popular songs. We will use these chords in different keys to enhance your ability to recognize chords and your 4-Mallet capabilities. A variety of time signatures and musical feels will be used to give a chance to learn the varieties of permutations as some of the ones listed below.

### Permutations:

- A. 1-2-3-4      Going up the instrument
- B. \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- C. 1-2-4-3      Inside Motion
- D. \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- F. \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_



## General Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family Email \_\_\_\_\_

Landmark that describes where you live (not address):

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