

The Marching Percussion Section: For the Marching Percussionist

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Reason For Clinic

- Goddard's Doctoral Thesis (2022)
 - "Equipping College Students for a Marching Percussion Career in the United States"¹
 - Majority of survey participants - Prepared as Performer, not Teacher/Arranger
 - Pedagogy Techniques: 143x
 - Comp/Arranging Techniques: 185x

The Goal - *To produce successful percussion educators!*

Marching Percussion Pedagogy

- Concert Percussion vs. Marching Percussion Technique - ***The Same!***
- What is written, equipment, and the role of the performer constitutes the differences.²
- Misconception - Playing "through the bar or drum" is **INCORRECT!**
- Dennis DeLucia's Teaching Plan³
 - The Grip (relax, relax, relax)
 - The Flow (arms-wrists-fingers - tension-free motion)
 - Strokes (Down, Up, Natural)
 - Reading (RH lead/LH lead/Alternating)
 - Rhythm Exercises
 - The Rudiments (OG/Standard & Hybrids)

¹ Thomas Paul Goddard, "Equipping College Students for a Marching Percussion Career in the United States" (Doctoral thesis, Liberty University, 2022), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/3415>.

² Tom Keck, "Marching Percussion," in *The System: Marching Band Methods*, Gary E. Smith (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2016), 249.

³ Dennis DeLucia, *Dennis DeLucia's Percussion Discussion* (Nashville: Row-Loff Productions, 1995), 8.

- Dennis DeLucia's 3 Rs⁴:
 - Reading (exercises & solo/ensemble literature)
 - 'Riting (composing/arranging)
 - Rudiments (OG/Standard & Hybrids)
- Basics must first be mastered to advance to higher level of achievement:
 - Marching percussion method books
 - Literature (exercises & solo/ensemble)
 - Technique manuscripts ("How To" books like the Bachman books)
 - Transcriptions of marching percussion performances (WGI/DCI show excerpts)
- Matched Grip - version of this is used on all instruments
- Why Traditional Grip? - Sling drumming & it looks cool!
- Legato Stroke - basic motion for all styles/instruments
- Dynamics are based on stick height:
p = 3" mp = 6" mf = 9" f = 12" ff = 15" fff = 21+" with full arm
- Mallet technique - concert technique
 - 2 mallets
 - 4 mallets (Stevens Grip is most common)
- Legato stroke (piston stroke) is the basic motion.
- Dynamics are based on mallet height:
pp = 1 1/2" p = 3" mp = 4 1/2" mf = 6" f = 9" ff = 12" fff = 15+" (w/forearm)

The Goal - To produce the most effective teaching philosophy!

Marching Percussion Arranging

- It is the director's role to ensure that the *total musical production* is:
 - Uniform in style (winds - DL - FE)
 - Balanced
 - Creates a strong combined musical effect
- The *role of the percussion section* in marching band is to:
 - Support & enhance the wind writing
 - Create a rhythmic pulse when appropriate
 - Highlight the percussion section in a featured role

⁴ Michael Udow, *Percussion Pedagogy: A Practical Guide for Studio Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 367.

- Wind Arranger - sketch mallet parts if integral to wind parts.
- Percussion Arranger
 - Develop those parts & make them percussion appropriate.
 - Don't introduce new musical material that isn't part of the OG music intent of the composition, unless they are experienced.
- FE - 4th section along w/WW, Brass, & DL.
- Don't **overuse** FE! FE shouldn't play continuous throughout compared to other sections.
- Write fewer musical lines for the mallets - 1 for vibes & 1 for marimba is plenty.
- Don't always have marimbas & vibes playing together. Use each as a unique tone color: woods/metals
- Use xylo & glock colors sparingly.
- Mallets should double the WWs only occasionally.
- Write aux Perc like a composer would for concert band or orchestra.
- Use full DL ensemble sparingly - save for full impacts, fills, & features.
- To accompany the winds, use 1 or 2 sub-sections only (rarely snares & tenors together).
- Include *dynamics* in the initial writing & insist they are actually performed.
- Develop rhythmic motives & have direction. All fast notes are **boring**. Rhythmic variety is pleasing to all.
- Ensure the *level of difficulty* is appropriate for the players.
- Be flexible & willing to *re-write &/or cut* once music gets on the field. It never sounds the same in standing rehearsal or on the computer as it does in the drill.
- Listen to the wind section at each segment with & without the DL & FE. Decide which way it sounds better as a total music package.
- Less is more & more is less!
- Need to be proficient in the following:
 - Notation - Finale or Sibelius

- Digital Audio Workstation - Logic Pro, Pro-Tools, Ableton, Digital Performer, Cubase, Studio One, Reason, GarageBand, etc.
- Drill Writing: Pyware, EnVision 3D, Field Artist 3, Drill Studio, Precision, etc.

The Goal - To produce the most professional representation of your skills!

Marching Percussion Performance

- High School may only have budget for 1 percussion teacher, resulting in them having to split their time between both sections (DL & FE). So, combine the warm-up of DL & FE!
- Key components of effective warm-up:
 - DL: Singles/Doubles/Triples, 2 Height, Accents, Timing, Rolls, Rudiments, etc.
 - FE: Scales/Arpeggios, Vertical/Independent/Alternating/Lateral Rotations, Block Chords, Permutations, Interval Control, etc.
- Listening, Balance, Blend

The Goal - To produce the most efficient warm-up routine!

Recommended Resources

Beck, John H., ed. *Encyclopedia of Percussion*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Buyer, Paul. *Drumline Gold: Innovative Systems for Marching Percussion Excellence*. Chicago: Meredith Music Publications, 2020.

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Freytag, Edward. *The Rudimental Cookbook*. Nashville: Row-Loff Productions, 1993.

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- . "Using a Metronome with the Marching Ensemble." *Percussive Notes* 40, no. 1 (February 2002): 23-24. <http://www.marchingroundtable.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Using-A-Metronome-1.pdf>.
- Wooten, John. *The Drummer's Rudimental Reference Book*. Nashville: Row-Loff Productions, 1992.