



THE BLUE WAY

METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND AUDITION MATERIALS

SNARE DRUM



SNARE DRUM AUDITION BOOK

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Thank you for your interest in the 2010 Bluecoats Snare Line. This booklet is designed to help you become a better musician and to help you have a successful audition experience. Please read everything in this booklet carefully and prepare all of the required material to the best of your ability!

The Bluecoats will be hosting audition camps in Ohio, Texas and Southern California on separate weekends in November and December. Attending a camp gives us an opportunity to get to know you and allows you a chance to experience life as a Bluecoat member.

Audition Camp Dates and Locations

November 21-22 Austin, TX
November 28-29 Canton, OH
December 6 Orange County, CA

Following the completion of your audition weekend, you will have a clear understanding of where you stand and whether or not you have been selected to continue in the auditions process.

The best way to find additional information about the Bluecoats and registration for an Audition camp is by visiting our website at: www.bluecoats.com. The website also contains history of the corps, audition information, and other information regarding the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps. Please visit the website before attending your first camp.

If you have questions about any of the content in this packet, or there is anything that you need to make the staff aware of before auditions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Mike Jackson – mjackson@bluecoats.com

We look forward to seeing you at camp!

The Bluecoats Percussion Staff

Audition Process

The audition process will break down into two areas:

1. Individual evaluation
2. Ensemble performance

During the individual evaluation, you will also be asked to perform exercises from this packet as well as other basic rudimental skills. Expect to receive immediate and detailed feedback from an instructor during your individual evaluation.

In the ensemble environment, we will be looking for your ability to blend, balance, and adapt. As we work through the technique program as an ensemble, specific explanations of approach will take place. Your ability to keep an open mind and incorporate the Bluecoats way of doing things in your playing will be crucial.

Audition Suggestions

Preparation

- ❑ The success of your performance at the audition will be directly related to the level of preparation of the audition material
- ❑ If possible, meet with a private lesson teacher on a regular basis prior to the audition
- ❑ Record yourself with some type of electronic device. Listen critically to the recording and work to perfect your performance
- ❑ Use a metronome!
- ❑ Be able to mark time to all the audition material

Audition

- ❑ Keep in mind that you are auditioning at all times. Be professional!
- ❑ Be sure to ask questions if you are confused about anything you are being asked to play
- ❑ Prepare yourself to be involved in a tedious and competitive process. Your ability to stay mentally engaged in the process throughout the weekend will be crucial to your success

2010 Bluecoats Snare line



Methods & Techniques

- In order to achieve our goal of being the absolute best in the activity, we must simultaneously achieve exact uniformity in technique, touch, sound quality, rhythmic clarity, and dynamic clarity
- Always strive for a BIG, STRONG, uniform quality of sound as you play--- quality of sound is everything
- Always strive for a relaxed physical sensation
- Allow the stick to resonate naturally within the hand, don't suffocate it
- Efficient Motion/Use of energy while maintaining rhythmic accuracy at all times
- Create presence behind the instrument---“big upper body” while maintaining relaxation
- When practicing, don't be afraid to check yourself.... Practice as often as possible on a drum, with a met, marking time, in front of a mirror to encourage absolute consistency
- Although not hand-technique related, ALWAYS strive for perfect rhythms, sound quality, and consistency

Implement Grip

Right Hand:

- Thumb/Index finger connect approx. 1/3 from the bottom of the stick
- Thumb is parallel with the stick (runs along the stick)
- Middle, ring, and pinky fingers are all wrapped naturally around the stick, while never completely leaving the stick when in motion



- The butt of the stick should be slightly visible out the back of the hand



NO



YES

Left Hand:

- Back of the stick should rest naturally in the “webby” connection between the thumb and index finger
- Stick rests on the cuticle of the relaxed ring finger
- Pinky rides relaxed underneath the ring finger, while avoiding unnecessary space between ring/pinky
- Pad of the thumb should connect just to the left of the first knuckle on the index finger (connect roughly 1/3 up the stick)
- Avoid tension in both the first knuckle and the tip of the thumb
- Middle finger naturally curves along the stick---AVOID straightening the finger or creating space between the middle and index fingers
- Avoid straightening or opening fingers. Allow for a natural curvature of the fingers (Hand creates a “C” position from a top angle), but do not condense your hand!

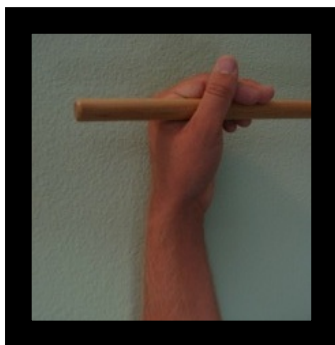


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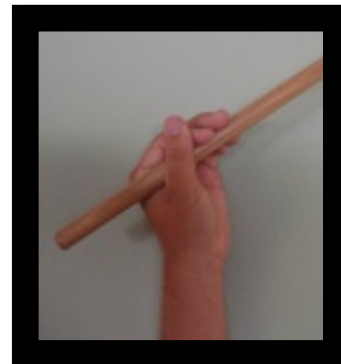


YES

- If it were to rain on the hand, water should be able to land in the palm and roll off, rather than A) collecting in the palm, or B) not being able to land in your palm at all
- The back of the hand should create an outward slope leading to the formation of a straight line from the forearm to the tip of the thumb---AVOID the back of hand being flush with the forearm



NO



YES

Playing Position

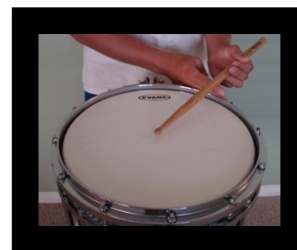
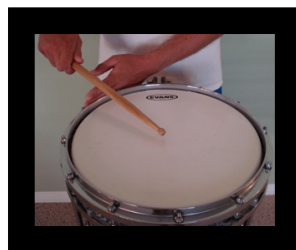
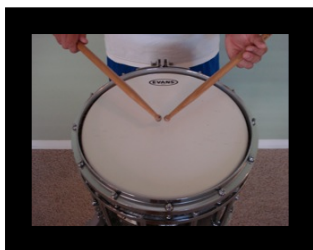
Key Points:

- In order to achieve an ideal positioning over the drum, work from the beads of the stick backwards up to the shoulders
- Generally, drum height is determined by the left forearm being SLIGHTLY angled downward, but will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis---this will affect your positioning on both right and left arms
- The shoulders should be very relaxed to avoid translating tension while still maintaining correct posture (“soft shoulders”)
- From the shoulders to the bead should be “downhill” at all times



Stick Positions:

- Beads are 1/2” apart, splitting the center of the drumhead
- Beads are 1/2” above the center of the drumhead
- Sticks should create a “^” with an approximate 90-degree angle between them (slightly acute)
- On a Yamaha 14” snare drum, the right stick should be splitting the “4 o’clock” and “5 o’clock” tension rods, and the left should split the “7 o’clock” and “8 o’clock” tension rods
- The bottom of the sticks should be angled approx. two fingers above the outside portion of the top rim)



Right Hand Position:

- The right hand should be rotated slightly outward in relation to the drum, (The hand should not be completely flat to the drum [German grip], nor rotated completely vertical [French Grip], as these tend to hinder use of finger motion and wrist motion respectively)
- Right arm should be naturally draped down, but definitely not resting against the body---avoid pushing the elbow up creating unnecessary tension in the upper body



Left Hand Position:

- Drop the left hand completely at the side of the body, relaxing the entire upper left arm---from this position bend at the elbow and place the stick over the defined position on the drum
- Avoid pulling the elbow into the body, or pushing it outward
- Left forearm should be roughly parallel with the drum



Strokes

Key Points:

- Described in this section are the Full (Legato) and Down (Marcato) Strokes
- Always lead the stroke from the head of the stick
- Right hand should be more of a hinge motion (rest your arm on a table and knock on it without picking up your arm; this is the primary motion of the right wrist)
- Left hand should rotate similar to turning a doorknob
- The main focus for both hands is a wrist turn, but allow the wrist, fingers, and arms to work together to create a full/relaxed sound
- When playing, the weight of the stick generally sits in the middle of the right hand (between the middle and ring fingers), and the “webby” portion of the left hand
 - Having the weight/rotation points further back in the hand (rather than the front finger fulcrums) enables us to achieve a fuller sound while focusing on the proper wrist rotation
- Minimize the amount of “human interference,” allow each stroke to be as efficient as possible
- If the stick is held tightly, the natural vibrations and resonance of the stick are “choked off,” resulting in a very thin quality of sound
 - Consequently, the shock of an improper stroke into the drum will be transferred directly into the player’s hands and forearms---potentially resulting in unnecessary injury
 - Always let the stick “breathe” in the hands

Legato/Full Stroke:

- Think “8 on a hand”
- Sticks start and stop at the same point, letting the stick “bounce” back naturally
- Goal is to allow the rebound to “do the work”
- Rebound should be the same speed as the initial movement (don’t stop it!)
- Avoid letting the stick hit the back of the hand, which stops the motion

Marcato/Down Strokes:

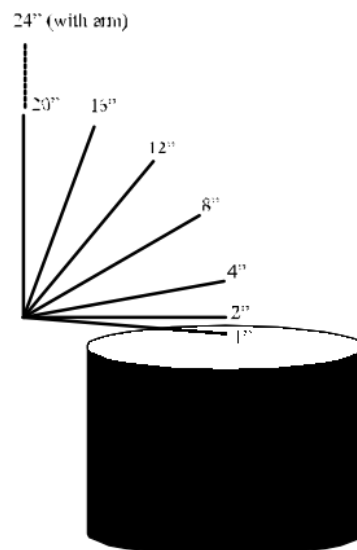
- Think “tap accents”
- Should **sound the same** as full strokes, and **feel the same prior to hitting the drum**
- Once contact is made with the drum, the difference between full and down strokes is the stopping of the wrist motion, which prevents the stick from rebounding to the initial height
- Avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the motion

Dynamics

- We use a dynamic system that **includes** specific heights---this makes it easier to understand visually, while helping to create uniformity
- We strive to have a consistent approach to the drum regardless of heights/dynamics
- In general, consistency of heights dictate volume, however the music is the ultimate factor in defining volume (there will be situations in which players are asked to play a phrase stronger or lighter than normal for musical expression)
- Additional arm is added above 20"
- The sticks will never travel past vertical but will be higher in the air because of the arm extension above 20"

Approximate Heights

- ppp 1" (grace notes)
- pp 2" (For more delicate passages)
- p 4" (common inner beat height)
- mp 8"
- mf 12"
- f 16"
- ff 20" (sticks vertical)
- Above 20" will be specifically defined for visual effect.



How you feel when you drum

- Relaxed
- Strong
- Confident
- Let the sticks feel "heavy" inside your hands---let the weight do the work
- The stronger a player you are and the more chops you possess, the more efficient you become, hence the more relaxed you are
- Learning to breathe naturally while playing anything regardless of difficulty will result in a more relaxed, healthy sound and approach
- If in doubt, **listen** to what you are playing in order to correct issues

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2010 Bluecoats Battery Percussion Ensemble

Tim Jackson

THE BLUE WAY

Flam 1-2-3

♩ = 120

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The staff is in 3/4 time. The rhythm consists of eighth notes with accents. The drum notation below the staff is: **f** R L L R R R L R R L L L R R L L L R L L R R R L.

Musical notation for measures 7-11. Measure 7 is boxed with the number 7. The staff is in 3/4 time. The drum notation below the staff is: R R R L R R L L L R L L R R R R L L L L S S S S SIM.

Musical notation for measures 12-11. Measure 12 is boxed with the number 8. The staff is in 3/4 time. The drum notation below the staff is: **f** R L L R R R L L L L L L R L L R R R L L L R R R L L L L R R R L L.

Musical notation for measures 12-11. Measure 12 is boxed with the number 12. The staff is in 4/4 time. The drum notation below the staff is: R R L L L R R R L L L R R R R L L L L R R R R L.

Musical notation for measures 14-11. Measure 14 is boxed with the number 14. The staff is in 3/4 time. The drum notation below the staff is: R R R L L L R R R L L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L L R R R R L R R R.

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Alternatives

♩ = 152

Musical staff 1: Snare drum notation in 4/4 time. It features a series of eighth-note triplets with accents. The first four measures are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Below the staff, the drumming pattern is indicated as R L R L R L SIM.

Musical staff 2: Continuation of the snare drum notation with eighth-note triplets and accents. A measure marker '7' is placed above the staff.

Musical staff 3: Continuation of the snare drum notation, including eighth-note quintuplets. A measure marker '12' is placed above the staff. A dynamic marking *p* (piano) is followed by a crescendo hairpin leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Musical staff 4: Continuation of the snare drum notation with eighth-note triplets and accents.

Musical staff 5: Continuation of the snare drum notation with eighth-note triplets and accents. A dynamic marking *p* (piano) is placed below the staff.

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URTRA

♩. = 156

II 12/8

f

R L L R R R L L L L R R R R R

4

R L L R R L R R L L

7

R L L R R R L

10

p

13

f

R L L R R R L L L L R R R R R L R L R L R

SNARE

2010 Bluecoats Battery Percussion Ensemble Audition Materials

Tom Rarick

THE BLUE WAY

Children's Hour Excerpt

♩ = 180

Musical notation for the first system of 'The Blue Way'. It features a snare drum staff in 4/4 time with a tempo of 180. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and accents. The drumming pattern is indicated by 'R' for right and 'L' for left. Dynamics include *ff*, *mp*, and *f*. The pattern is: R R mp, RLRLLRLRLL, RLLRLLRLRL, RLLRRRLRLLLRLL.

Musical notation for the second system of 'The Blue Way'. It starts with a boxed measure number '5'. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and accents. The drumming pattern is indicated by 'R' for right and 'L' for left. Dynamics include *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, and *fff f*. A 'PING' instruction is present above a note. The pattern is: R R L L R, R L R L R L R L, R L R L R L R L, R L R L R L R L.

Musical notation for the third system of 'The Blue Way'. It starts with a boxed measure number '11'. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and accents. The drumming pattern is indicated by 'L' for left and 'R' for right. Dynamics include *ff*, *fff*, *mf*, and *f mf*. A '(SHELL)' instruction is present above a note. The pattern is: L R, R, L, R, RL, RL, R R R R, L R L, R R R L R R L R L L.

Musical notation for the fourth system of 'The Blue Way'. It starts with a boxed measure number '15'. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and accents. The drumming pattern is indicated by 'R' for right and 'L' for left. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, and *mf*. The pattern is: R R L, R L R R L, L R L R L R L, R, R, R, R.

Musical notation for the fifth system of 'The Blue Way'. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and accents. The drumming pattern is indicated by 'R' for right and 'L' for left. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, *mp*, and *ff*. 'HALFWAY' and 'CENTER' instructions are present above notes. The pattern is: R L L R R R L R R L L L R L, R, L R, L R, R, R, R, R.