



Ensemble Concepts for the Marching Percussion Section

CLINICIAN:

Tanner Trigg

DEMONSTRATION GROUP:

Hebron HS Marching Percussion

Texas Bandmasters Association 2015 Convention/Clinic

JULY 23-26, 2015

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

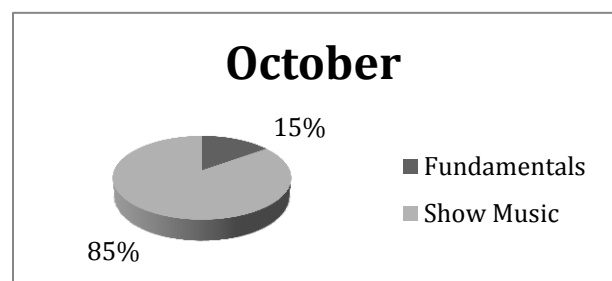
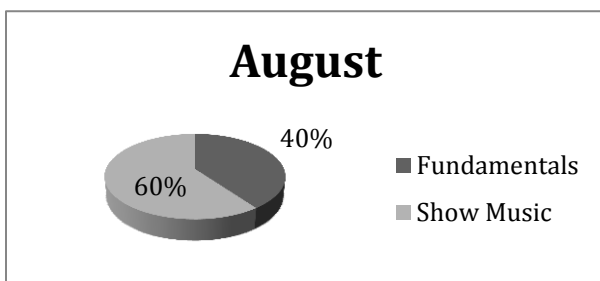
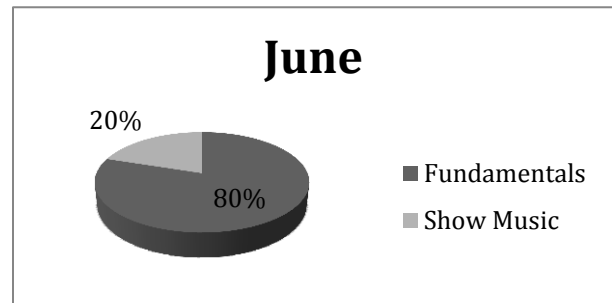
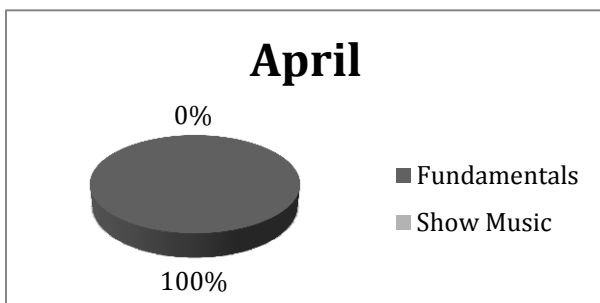
Ensemble Concepts for the Marching Percussion Section

Hebron High School Drumline – Tanner Trigg, Director

2015 Texas Bandmasters Association Convention
Friday, July 24th, Exhibit Hall D, 9:15am - 10:15am

Priorities and Timeline

- Drum Club and Pit Club begin in April
- Students receive a movement of the show in June
- The pie charts below illustrate "Time spent on Fundamentals vs. Show Music"



Equipment

Battery Sticks:

- Snares- Innovative Percussion PR2
- Quads – Innovative Percussion TS-2 and FT-1
- Bass- FBX Series (we avoid the FBX – 5's to help prevent covering the band in a dome)
- Different types of sticks can provide great textures for certain parts of the show.
- Be sure the students are getting well-balanced sticks.

Keyboard Mallets:

- Marimbas- Innovative Percussion James Ancona Series, Jim Casella 1003's, Robin Engleman Series 703,704, Sandi Rennick Series
- Vibraphones- Innovative Percussion James Ancona Series, Anders Astrand Series
- Xylophone- Innovative Percussion James Ross Series, Orchestral Series, Jim Casella 1008's
- Timpani – Innovative Percussion GTX series

Heads:

- Snare – Remo Black Max, Falam XT
- Quads- Remo Renaissance, Remo Pinstripes, Remo Black Suede
- Bass – Powermax
- Concert Bass – Fiberskyn III

Tuning

- Tuning the drums can also make your drumline sound more crisp and clean.
- Keeping the drums tuned will allow your heads to last longer.
- Quads are tuned up before every rehearsal; snares and basses before every performance.
- Hebron does a complete head change twice a year.
- Concert bass drums are tuned before each performance and tuned to a G on both sides of the drum (referencing a 36" bass drum). Tuning the drum too low will not get the punch sound you want from that instrument.

Electronics

- Amplify **good sounds** and make your first priority the performer and his/her sound.
 - Use a generator rather than battery power or stadium power.
- Below is the microphone set up Hebron High School utilizes:
 - Two microphones per marimba spread out so the instrument is split into thirds. A general starting point is 12"-13" away from the keyboard. However, if you have a larger instrument you may need to move the mics further from the keyboard to extend its range.
 - One microphone per vibraphone placed in the center of the vibraphone 15" from the keyboard.
- One-two students will operate the soundboard and will change scenes throughout the show. Hebron will have 40-60 scene changes on the soundboard throughout a single show.
- The ability for a mixer to be able to store scenes and adjustments to each section aid you in getting the right balance and character out of each passage of the marching show.

Balance and Blend

- Balance with the entire ensemble, including the winds.
- Every part has a purpose and should be heard. However, it is important to find its role in comparison to other lines in the music and balance accordingly.
- Blending within a section is extremely important and is sometimes the hardest aspect of the marching band show. Making every student sound the exact same is the number one priority before you can balance and blend with another section.
- Blending sections can become more difficult when dynamics contrast between the different lines.

Chops vs. Technique

- It is crucial for your group to start working on technique and chops at a very early stage.
- Play with a big sound and develop the group's muscles from the beginning.
- The more muscle you have, the louder and SOFTER a percussion section can play.
- Technique is constantly addressed throughout the fundamental process.
- You know you did not spend enough time on fundamentals if you are primarily addressing technique issues during ensemble rehearsal. This means the music is too demanding for where the students are fundamentally.

Feel

- "Tapability" is one of the biggest factors in a marching band show.
- Your group should consistently play with a metronome until the group feels the time and tempo internally.
- Find the "big" beat and what you want the audience to bob their head to.
- When different rhythms overlap, balancing the different instruments can help the audience still feel the main pulse.

Writing and Orchestration

- Writing and orchestration has a major effect on the show.
- Percussion is almost ALWAYS too loud.
- Choose the right implement for each section.
- A seasoned arranger who understands the tricks of properly incorporating the percussion with the winds can address most of the balance and timing concerns before it reaches the students.
- Less is more when it comes to the percussion in the marching band show. Percussion will have small windows to shine and the rest is for support of the winds.
- The arrangement should have as much detail as possible. Every dynamic, sticking, phrase marking, stress mark, special request, etc. should be displayed in the arrangement for the most positive results.
- The writing should reflect the same dynamic contrast as the winds, which includes the lower end of the spectrum. This is where writing parts with smaller sticks, brushes, or even fewer players can make the difference in the ensembles balance problems.

Musicality

- Every section should trigger some sort of emotion in the audience.
- As a performer you will look emotional but not let the emotions dictate the clarity of the musical performance.
- Imagery can help a group understand what to think during sections.
- Pinpoint what you want the audience to listen to.
- The percussion needs to be able to match all dynamic levels the winds have in the show, which proves difficult at the lower end of the spectrum.

Listening Responsibility

- Our goal is to eliminate variables or things that can go wrong.
- Everyone in the front ensemble listens to one player in the middle whom listens back to the battery.
- Everyone in the battery listens in to one individual.
- Always listen to the instrument furthest from the front sideline.
- Try to have your drill writer avoid spreading the battery too far across the field, as that will create timing problems.
- The battery may need to anticipate an entrance in comparison to the drum major using “duts”, which are only audible to the performers.

Culture

- The atmosphere needs to be extremely positive.
- Section leaders are managers and are in charge of keeping the morale and encouragement at an all time high. They should eat together, drive together, drum together, have slumber parties together, etc. If they are best friends, it becomes an environment of “my friends are counting on me”.
- Let the students know the expectations and that the expectations are high. Preparation, communication, and respect will help create a successful drumline.
- The students should understand that their instructional time with a teacher is the tip of the iceberg. The students are the ones who will make or break success by the amount of time they put in outside the classroom. It is the teacher’s job to motivate and guide.

Expect everything from the members of your studio. The students can handle more information and responsibilities than you anticipate. Student’s love seeing themselves improve. The further you get into the year, the more minute the improvements become and the harder it is to find motivation to make those small adjustments. It is important to keep them motivated throughout the entirety of the year.

Special thanks to the *Texas Bandmasters Association* and the students of the *Hebron High School Percussion Studio*. Also the Directors of Hebron High School; Andy Sealy, JP Wilson, and Travis Pruitt. We would also like to thank Innovative Percussion, Remo, Lonestar Percussion, and Dynasty for your support of the Hebron Percussion Studio.