Starter Packet
for
Percussion
Note Values

- A whole note gets four counts in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.
- A half note gets two counts in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.
- A quarter note gets one count in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.
- An eighth note gets a half of a count in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.
A Relaxed Approach to Drum Technique

Matched Grip (Video available on bandrox.com)

The same, matched grip is used with both your bell mallets and your snare drum sticks. Each hand holds the mallet/stick the same way. Grip the stick with your thumb at the side and your forefinger curled underneath. Don’t squeeze the stick, just use your thumb and first finger as guides to keep the stick from wobbling from side to side. The stick passes under the center of your hand, with your middle and ring fingers curled under for support. As a test, you should be able to take your thumb and index finger off the stick and still be able to swing it up and down. It is very important not to flare out your fingers when striking the instrument. Your pinky should be relaxed and out of the way, not pointing out like you’re sipping tea!

Snare Drum Lesson #1 (Relaxed Stroke: Video available on bandrox.com)

Many beginning percussionists want to play fast notes right away, before developing a smooth, relaxed stroke. You might think that the faster you play, the harder you have to hammer the sticks into the drum. Don’t fall into that trap! With tense hands, arms and shoulders hammering a stroke into the drum, you will never develop good speed and control.

A drum stick naturally bounces back up after hitting a drum. Playing with too much force causes the stick to continue downward instead of making this natural rebound. Keeping your arms and hands more relaxed makes it easier for you to use the rebound to play faster and cleaner notes.

Relax your shoulder, arm and hand. Hold your sticks with matched grip and your arms hanging by your sides. Lift the stick into position by raising your forearm, bending at the elbow. Let the weight of the stick pull your hand down from the wrist as you raise your arm.

With your sticks parallel to the floor, form an upside down “V” shape over the drum. Now you’re ready to play!

Snare Drum Exercise (Dropping the Stick: Video available on bandrox.com)

Using your relaxed, matched grip, bend your wrist to lift the stick and drop it onto the drum. After you strike the drum, your wrist stays in the down position. If your hands are relaxed, the stick will pop back and stop about an inch above the drum.

The first time you try this exercise, you might think that the stick will kick back and cause you to lose control. It won’t, so fight the urge to grip tighter. With a relaxed arm/hand, and fingers in the correct position, your stick will bounce back perfectly and stop just above the drum head.
Snare Drum Lesson #2 (The Rebound Stroke: Video available on bandrox.com)

Now that we have a good feel for the stick hitting the drum, we can play multiple strokes (several notes back-to-back without stopping). Instead of letting your hand stop and hover over the drum after playing one note, let the stick rebound off the drum and drop back down in one fluid motion. It’s a lot like dribbling a basketball. Stay relaxed and move in synch with the rebound off the drum.

Snare Drum Exercise (Eight On A Hand: Video available on bandrox.com)

It’s a good idea to practice in front of a mirror so that you can check yourself. Watch and listen for these things the whole time:

- keep the rebound motion the same in both hands, one shouldn’t be stronger than the other
- play at a steady speed the whole time, don’t speed up or slow down
- listen for consistent sound from both hands, one shouldn’t be louder than the other
- both hands stay at the same height, one shouldn’t be higher than the other

1. Eight On A Hand - Play quarter notes using only your right hand, then only your left hand

2. Single Alternating Stroke - Alternate strokes between your right and left hands
Rhythms in Unison
Volume I (Revised 7/08)

1.
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2.
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8.
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The Treble Clef Staff

The musical alphabet uses only the letters **ABCDEFG**. When you reach the letter **G**, you start over with **A**. The diagrams below show the same thing in two different ways. To read music, you need to memorize the lines and spaces.

The first diagram shows the traditional method of learning the lines and spaces. The four spaces within the staff spell the word **FACE**. It’s easy if you think of **SPACEFACE**! The lines, from bottom to top, can make a phrase like “**Every Good Boy Does Fine.**” Can you create another phrase using **EGBDF**?

![Traditional Treble Clef Staff Diagram]

The second diagram shows the same letter names for the lines and spaces as the first diagram. When moving up the staff from line to space, you will notice that the letters are in alphabetical order. When a note is too low or too high to fit on the staff, short lines are added to extend the staff. These are called **ledger lines**.

![Ledger Lines Diagram]
Write the letter names of the following notes:

Draw the following notes:

Write the letter names of the following notes:

Draw the following notes:
Keyboard Percussion - Unit A

DIRECTIONS: For each note below, write the note name and label each note on the keyboard diagrams at the bottom of the page. When you're finished naming and labeling the notes, play the notes on your instrument.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  

6.  
7.  
8.  
9.  
10.  

The figures below represent keyboard percussion or bells. Write the name of each note from the examples above in the correct box representing the bar to be struck. The bottom note (the lower left bar) is "G." When you’re finished writing in the note names, play the notes.
Mallets

To be a good mallet player you have to read your music to see what note to play and instantly know where it is on the bell set. Don’t just try to memorize the music. It might be easy to do that in the beginning, but you won’t be able to do it later when the music gets more complex. It’s a lot like riding a bicycle - Look where you’re going, if you stare at the pedals you’re sure to crash!

Bells Lesson #1 (Setup and Playing Position: Video link available on bandrox.com)

Lower your music stand so it is just above the bells in the center of your instrument. You should be able to look at your music and still see the bars of your bell set with your peripheral vision.

Bells Lesson #2 (Grip and The Piston Stroke: Video link available on bandrox.com)

With a matched grip and your mallets parallel to the floor, form an upside down "V" shape over the bells. Be careful not to twist your wrist, or else your thumbnail will be on top instead of to the side.

**Hand Position Experiment**

Using your right hand, correctly hold your mallet over any bar on your bell set. See how the ball of the mallet hovers just above the note you want to hit? Now, twist your wrist to the right so that your thumbnail is facing up. The ball of the mallet now hovers over a different note instead of the one you wanted to hit!

The main difference between playing bells and playing drums is that there is no rebound on the bells. You have to lift your mallet off the bell set because it doesn’t naturally bounce back. The stroke we use with a mallet is called the “Piston Stroke.”

Start about 2 inches above the bells and strike the center of the bar the same way you would with a drum stick, but use your wrist to lift the mallet back to its original position instead of expecting it to bounce. It should feel like one wrist motion, not two separate ones, like you accidentally touched a hot stove with your finger — you immediately lift it back off the surface.
Basic Bells

Too Cool For School  (Keep your eyes on the music and don't look down)

Steppin' Out  (Keep your mallets just above bars and draw the sound out of each note)

Skippin' In  (Be careful of your sticking. It’s important to follow the L-R pattern)

Step To It, Skip!  (Keep you hands in fluid motion and your eyes on the music)

Bb Major Scale  (Eyes on the music, say the note names)  Arpeggio

Chromatic Scale  (Say the names of the notes out loud and keep your hands moving)
Simple Songs (Bells)

Old Man There

Florida Folk Song

Old man there sit-ten on a log wastin' his time wastin' his time

Hot Cross Buns

English Folk Song

Hot cross buns, Hot cross buns, one a pen-ny two a pen-ny Hot cross buns

Frog in the Meadow

North Carolina Folk Song

Frog in the mea-dow can't get him out take a lit-tle stick and stir him a-bout

There She Goes

New York Folk Song

There she goes There she goes all dressed up in her sun-day clothes

The Viper

Magic Mountain Folk Song

Are you a-fraid to fall from the sky? You say your not so here is your ride!
Simple Songs (Bells)

Fais Dodo

Fais do - do co - las mon p'tit fre - re Fais do - do t'au - ras du lo - lo

Hop Old Squirrel

Hop old squirrel ei -dle-dum ei -dle-dum Hop old squirrel ei -dle-dum - dum

Hop old squirrel ei -dle-dum ei -dle-dum Hop old squirrel ei -dle-dum day

Long Legged Sailor

Did you e-ver e-ver e-ver in your long legg-ed life see a long legg-ed sail-orwith a long legg-ed wife
Snare Drum Lesson #3 (Multiple Bounce or “Buzz” Roll: Video available on bandrox.com)

For good buzz sounds on the snare drum, relax your grip so that it feels a little looser than normal, but not “wobbly.” If they wobble, you’ll lose control of the sticks and end up with a floppy bounce to start the stroke. Done correctly, you’ll hear a long “buzz” sound after the first stroke.

Snare Drum Exercise (Buzz Strokes: Video available on bandrox.com)

Practice buzz strokes slowly, about one per second, with just your right hand until all your buzz strokes sound the same, then do the same thing with only your left hand. Make the “buzz” sound as long as possible while playing at a steady pace. Finally, practice buzzing with alternate strokes. Once you get it consistently perfect at a slow, steady speed, try going a little faster. Don’t rush it! Get it perfect before you decide to try a faster speed. Keep these things in mind the whole time:

- keep control of your sticks, relax without being wobbly
- listen for a long buzz sound
- maintain a steady tempo (speed) all of the time

1. Quarter Note Buzz - right hand only, then left hand only, then alternate hands

2. Eighth Note Buzz - alternate hands twice as fast as the last exercise
Snare Drum Lesson #4 (Playing Flams: Video available on bandrox.com)

A flam is one of the basic rudiments (patterns) of drumming. You play a very quick note, called a “grace note” followed by a regular stroke. The height of your sticks over the drum is very important. Start with your left stick only 2 inches above the drum and your right stick at normal height, about 8 inches above the drum. The lower stick always plays the grace note and the higher stick always plays the regular stroke. The grace note comes immediately before the regular stroke. Together, they make the sound “flam,” NOT the sound “ta-dum.”

Snare Drum Exercise (Playing Flams: Video available on bandrox.com)

Practice dropping the stick from 2 inches above the drum for the grace note and 8 inches above the drum for the quarter note. Concentrate on these three things as you practice:

- all your flams should sound the same
- the grace note is just before the regular one, not at the same time or with a space in between
- a clear difference in the volume of the two notes, grace not softer, regular stroke louder

1. Consecutive right hand flams - right hand plays regular stroke, left hand plays grace note

2. Consecutive left hand flams - left hand plays regular stroke, right hand plays grace note

3. Alternating flams - each hand takes a turn playing the grace note or the regular stroke

After those exercises seem easy, challenge yourself. Practice these slowly and thoughtfully.
Simple Songs (Snare Drum and Bass Drum)

Fais Dodo
French Folk Song

Hop Old Squirrel
Virginia Folk Song

Long Legged Sailor
Sea Chantey
Challenge Songs (Snare Drum and Bass Drum)

Merrily We Roll Along

Lightly Row - Duet

Wanna Bet?

This Old Man

The Conquering Hero - Duet

Double or Nothin'

A

B

Snares Off

20
Snare Drum Technical Drills

1. **Legato** (Smooth rebound strokes)

   ![Legato Diagram]

2. **Staccato** (Hit, then stop the stick 1.5 inches above the drumhead after the rebound. Drop the stick to "tap" the second note. Be sure not to lift.)

   ![Staccato Diagram]

3. **Drop-Ins (Sixteenth Notes)** (Smooth, rebound strokes. Also practice starting with your left hand.)

   ![Drop-Ins Diagram]

4. **Hut Dut** (Smooth, rebound strokes. Alternate all strokes starting with your right hand. Also practice starting with your left hand.)

   ![Hut Dut Diagram]