



RIVER CITY RHYTHM

DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

2024 AUDITION PACKET
MALLETS



Hello, and welcome to River City Rhythm's 2024 auditions!

As the summer season approaches, we are thrilled to extend a warm invitation to all aspiring drum corps talents of every experience level.


Our auditions are not only a gateway to exceptional musical experiences, but also an opportunity to join a close-knit family of passionate performers and instructors. RCR takes pride in the community and culture we have been building together and would love for YOU to come join us!

This packet contains the necessary audition materials and music exercises RCR will be playing throughout the season. Please prepare this material to the best of your ability to receive the best possible experience at our auditions!

Most importantly, please bring a positive attitude and be willing to learn new things!

We eagerly await your audition, and we are ready to witness the energy and enthusiasm you'll bring to River City Rhythm.

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Technique & Fundamentals

KEYBOARDS

At all times, stay as relaxed as possible. The rule is **NO TENSION!**

Posture

Playing in the front ensemble is not only about controlling your hands, but is a full-body exercise. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, spine straight upright, shoulders relaxed back, & elbows dropped naturally at your sides. Stand back from the keyboard so that your elbow is at your side or slightly back when holding mallets over the lower manual.

All parts of your body should stay loose and relaxed at all times. This will require continual awareness while you play as your body will automatically react to physical challenges by tensing up and trying to power through. Any amount of tension that you allow to regularly appear as you play will not only affect your ability to play but can also lead to serious injury.

Presence & Vibe

Performance is not something you put on with your uniform for shows; you must practice as you perform with every rep to perfect your craft.

We want to exude confidence, professionalism, & class at all times. Behind the board, you will appear confident & in control. Once away from your instrument, you should be humble, inviting, kind, & genuine to all people you come into contact with. You not only represent River City Rhythm, but you represent yourself as an emerging artist in the percussive arts.

While there are some moments where we will define visual performance, in general, we encourage you to tell your own story behind your instrument. The most important part of your visual performance is that it is a genuine expression of what you are feeling as you play.

Ensemble Timing

In any ensemble setting, each performer is responsible to discern pulse & align their playing with other performers. Our primary tool is our ears, both to listen for cues giving an overall pulse & to align micro-level rhythms to your immediate neighbor. Eyes are also a great tool, but will mainly be used as a mechanism to focus our ears. We will only rely solely on our eyes in moments where no audible cue is possible.

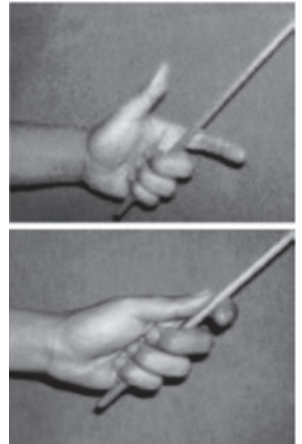
While there is a hierarchy of time leading towards the center of the ensemble, every performer has an individual responsibility to listen back to a source of time in addition to listening inward within the section. Each member of the ensemble must have an awareness of all performers around them & behind them to make calculated decisions and seamless adjustments to time.

Technique & Fundamentals

KEYBOARDS

Two Mallet Technique

Goal: most closely match your natural relaxed hand shape. Each finger, from pinky to pointer, should be less tightly wrapped around the mallet and more spaced apart than the last. Wrap your pinky fully around with the tip touching your palm. Your ring finger will almost fully wrap, lightly grazing your palm. Your middle finger will partly wrap, hanging in the air over your palm. Your pointer finger will slightly curve at each knuckle, extending to rest under your thumb. Rest the pad of your thumb gently on top. Move the mallet shaft so that your thumb and pointer finger meet at one-third of the way up the shaft, not including the head.



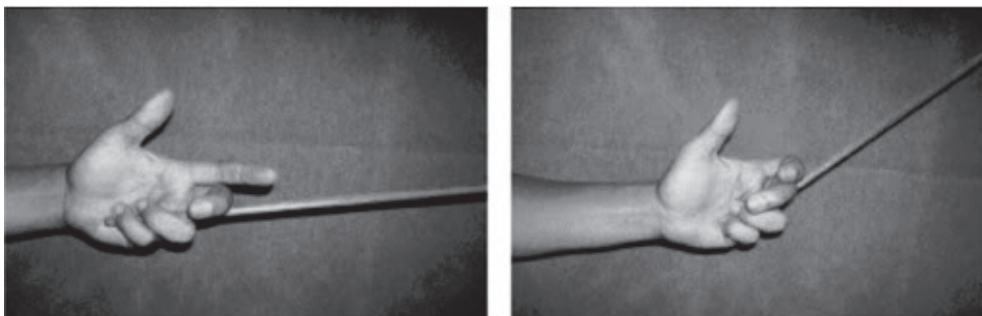
Each stroke is initiated with the mallets at their highest position. Allow the weight of the mallet to fall towards the instrument and use your wrist muscles to increase the downward velocity. Let the mallet naturally spring back up to the top of the stroke in a comfortable amount of time. At all tempos, keep a well-defined point at the top of the stroke where mallets return to, but have the mallets in constant motion while playing with no point in space where they pause.

Think of feeling the weight of the mallet in the back of your hand (in/below your pinky). Allow your arm to move naturally at the elbow, but do not actively engage arm muscles as part of the stroke.

Four Mallet Technique - Stevens Grip

Outside Mallets

Much like the two mallets' back finger fulcrum, anchor the outside mallet to the hand with the back two fingers wrapped fully around the mallet. Observe that the first segment of your ring finger is horizontal or nearly horizontal, acting as a 'table' on which the mallet sits. Avoid pointing your first knuckle downward and having the mallet rest there.



Technique & Fundamentals

Four Mallet Technique- Stevens Grip

Inside Mallets

The inside mallet is controlled by three points of contact. The butt of the inside mallet will be anchored by the tip of the middle finger into the fleshy part of the palm. Your middle finger will not reach to the very end of the mallet, instead allowing about ½ an inch sticking out past your middle finger to reach the palm. The mallet will then rest comfortably across the first knuckle of the index finger (the perch), and the pad of your thumb will rest gently flat on top.



Interval Control

Your outside mallet will stay in the same position relative to your palm, while the inside mallet can be manipulated to adjust the interval between the mallets. For a smaller interval, bend each knuckle of your pointer finger equally to pull the inside mallet towards the outside. Allow the base of the mallet in your palm to slide towards the bottom of the palm, near the meat of your thumb. For a larger interval, extend your pointer to push the inside mallet away from the outside. Maintain a small curve at each knuckle rather than fully straightening. Allow the base of the mallet in your palm to slide towards the top of your palm, eventually resting between the knuckles at the base of your fingers. Use the thumb to roll the mallet slightly along your perch in the direction of the interval change to maintain comfortable control over the mallet while extending the range of possible intervals.

Rotation

Begin with all mallets level at the top height of the stroke, with your wrist at the level of the keyboard. The mallet shafts will create an upward angle from your wrist at all times.

To play each mallet independently, rotate your wrist to keep one mallet head rotating in place while the other travels down to the keyboard and back up. The motion is similar to turning a doorknob. This should be only a wrist motion to eliminate any wiggle in the mallets. The fingers are only a method to hold the mallets in place while your wrist controls all motion, so do not use your fingers to adjust the mallet path as it travels.

Sticking Definition

When holding four mallets we number them 1-2-3-4 from left to right from the performer's perspective.

Technique & Fundamentals

Tension

Tension can occur at any of the joints involved with playing keyboards- from the first knuckle of the index finger & thumb, through the wrist, up the elbow, & even into the shoulders & shoulder blades. Tension is the result of one group of muscles relying on another set to accomplish the job that is required. For instance: when an uncomfortable tempo is demanded, wrist muscles lock up & rely on the muscles in the arm if they haven't been properly trained to rotate at such speed and velocity. We want to avoid this reaction- using larger muscles will lead to more energy expended than necessary while playing.

This can cause a multitude of complications later on including arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, ganglion cysts, tendonitis.



AVOID tension by not arching your thumb or curling your index finger.

Please have the patience to break down your technique and build your strength gradually.

Do not put yourself at risk of injury.

Technique & Fundamentals

Stroke Types

Double Vertical

Both mallets playing together. Match the height and velocity of each mallet to avoid flams. You should also remain relaxed so that all four mallets can rebound smoothly back to their original position at a comfortable pace. As with two mallets, keep the mallets in constant motion and avoid pausing at the top or bottom of the stroke except at very slow tempos.



Single Independent

Only one mallet playing in a hand, and the other mallet remains still. This stroke utilizes a rotating motion of the forearm and wrist. You should practice this until you alleviate any “wobble” that occurs in the stationary mallet. Do not keep the non-playing mallet in place by “squeezing” it, as this will cause tension and result in more wobbling. Practice with each individual mallet on a single note doing several repetitions until each feels “independent” of the other. The stroke is initiated using the wrist. Think of feeling the weight of the mallet in the back of your hand.

Inside Mallets

Only the inside mallet in each hand is used, as if playing with two mallets. Use a single independent stroke, but let the non-playing mallets relax to a comfortable height somewhere between the top and bottom of the stroke.



Single Alternating

Alternating strokes between mallets in the same hand. This stroke is a combination of the above techniques. This is normal and allows the path of the mallet to stay vertical. The mallets should start and end from the top of the stroke. Allow the mallet to return to its starting point before the other mallet in the same hand begins its stroke.

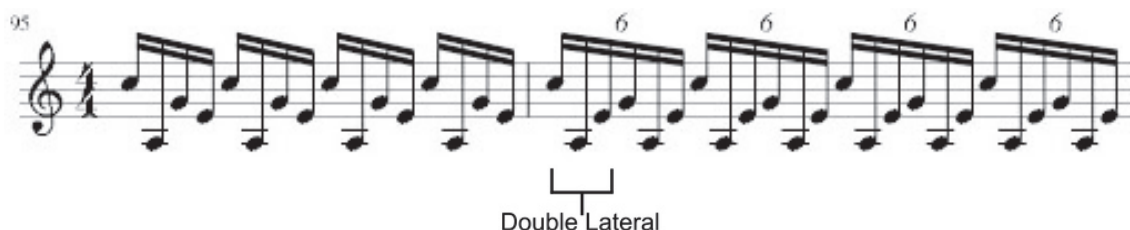


Technique & Fundamentals

Stroke Types

Double Laterals

Two independent strokes sped up and combined into one smooth motion from the wrist. Because the second mallet is striking immediately after the first one, the down-stroke of the second mallet will overlap with the return stroke of the first mallet. However, keep the second mallet at its full playing height until the first mallet reaches the keyboard to match the sound quality of each mallet. Try to keep the same underlying motion of each mallet by keeping your hand relaxed and allowing the weight of the mallet to direct it vertically. The combined movement is almost like scooping ice cream (for inside to outside laterals).



Triple Laterals

A double lateral with an additional note. The focus should remain on the sound quality of all three notes, making them even and strong. Practice these exercises "slow-fast slow"—start slow and smoothly accel. to the fastest tempo, you can comfortably play and then gradually slow down, back to the original tempo.

Independent Roll

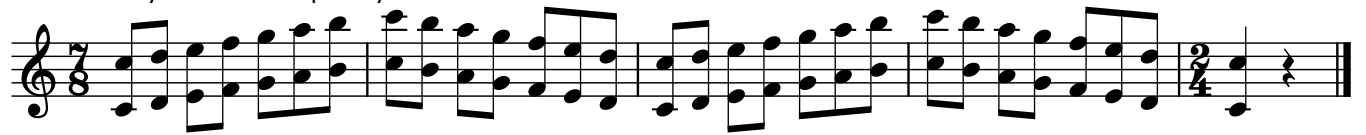
Also known as a one-handed roll, an independent roll is a fast alternating stroke that is intended to impart the illusion of a sustained sound with one hand while leaving the other hand free to play other rhythms or melodies. The motion is more similar to a lateral motion since both mallets move at the same time. You should feel comfortable playing one-handed rolls with both hands.

***These stroke types may be studied in depth throughout
Leigh Howard Stevens' Method of Movement.***

Octaves

♩ = 70-140

Play in all 12 major keys



Green Scales

♩ = 90-180

Play in all 12 major keys



5



Green Beans

♩ = 80-180

Play in all 12 major keys



4



7



11



Sweet Sixteen

♩ = 90-140

Natural sticking throughout

Musical notation for the first staff of 'Sweet Sixteen'. It begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a single eighth note with the sticking 'R' below it. The rest of the staff consists of continuous sixteenth-note patterns. The sticking 'RLR RLR RLR RLR' is written below the final four measures.

Musical notation for the second staff of 'Sweet Sixteen', starting at measure 4. It continues with sixteenth-note patterns. The sticking 'R RLR RLR RLR RL R' is written below the staff.

Musical notation for the third staff of 'Sweet Sixteen', starting at measure 7. It includes some notes with sharps. The sticking 'RL LRL LRL LRL L R LRL LRL LRL LRL' is written below the staff.

Musical notation for the fourth staff of 'Sweet Sixteen', starting at measure 10. It concludes with a double bar line. The sticking 'R L R R R L R L L L R L R' is written below the staff.

Space & Timing

♩ = 60-100

Musical notation for the first staff of 'Space & Timing'. It starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first four measures are quarter notes with rests. The next four measures are quarter notes with eighth-note rests. The final two measures are in 5/4 time, with quarter notes and eighth-note rests. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Musical notation for the second staff of 'Space & Timing', starting at measure 5. It features a repeat sign and a 'Repeat x4' instruction. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests in 4/4 and 5/4 time signatures.

Up Dog

♩ = 80-120

Musical score for 'Up Dog' in 7/8 time. The score consists of four staves of chords. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 80-120. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The first staff starts with a double bar line and repeat sign. The second staff begins at measure 5. The third staff begins at measure 9. The fourth staff begins at measure 13. The music features a variety of chord voicings, including triads and dyads, with some chromatic movement in the bass line.

Alternating Breakdown

♩ = 80-160

Musical score for 'Alternating Breakdown' in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 80-160. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a double bar line and repeat sign, followed by a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff begins at measure 9 and features a sequence of eighth notes with a '2' above the staff and a repeat sign below. The third staff begins at measure 17 and features a sequence of eighth notes with a '2' above the staff and a repeat sign below. The fourth staff begins at measure 25 and features a sequence of eighth notes with a '2' above the staff and a repeat sign below. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Lateral Breakdown

♩ = 120-180

Repeat moving up chromatically...

Repeat moving down chromatically...

Repeat moving up chromatically...

Repeat moving down chromatically...