

MARCHING THUNDER

HERD BEATS

Marshall University Snare Technique Packet 2021

Presence

- Confidence and determination are key to everything we do. This approach fosters continuous, positive growth.
- We maintain an upright posture during set position. Core muscles need to be engaged with a relaxed chest and arms. While playing it is essential that we continue breathing in order to maintain relaxation.
- The “performer” creates the atmosphere around them. We are not simply drummers, but percussive musical performers. Your presence and engagement will draw in the audience around you. The energy you put into the performance will create energy from the audience. (This is not an excuse to over-hype.)
- Energy and engagement are crucial at all times when in a performance setting. You will be the first and last thing the audience hears on game day.

Quality of Sound

- The first enemy of proper sound quality is tension in any area of the body. Learn the difference between muscle tension and muscle engagement.
- The body, working as one relaxed system, will allow the performer to maximize both control of the instrument and resonance.
- Allow both resonance of the head and the implement by maintaining a relaxed approach to playing.
- Commit to a consistent set position with beads securely in the correct playing zone, as defined for your individual instrument. Bead placement is an integral ingredient to sound production

DEFINITIONS

Stroke Types

1. Legato/Up Stroke

- A relaxed stroke with a smooth up motion to maximize rebound.
- The fingers are relaxed but remain on the stick. Do not allow excess space in the back fingers.
- The wrist initiates stroke, not the fingers.
- The stick rebounds fluidly with the grip serving as a guide, avoid the use of excess or artificial motion.

2. Staccato/Down Stroke

- A strong, aggressive motion. Do not mistake aggression for tension.
- The bead will be stopped at the drumhead with wrist, not tension in the front fulcrum.
- Play into the drumhead with resonating the drum being the objective. This is still achieved with a relaxed hand.

3. Marcato/Controlled Stroke

- A combination of Legato and Staccato stroke
- The bead is not completed as a 'down stroke' but is approached in a similar manner while still rebounding.
- In the Marcato stroke, the arm will follow the wrist up naturally as an extension of the stroke. Do not "create" motion that doesn't naturally exist.
- The grip remains relaxed.

Dynamic Definitions

Dynamic	Stick/Mallet Height
<i>pp</i>	1.5"
<i>p</i>	3"
<i>mp</i>	6"
<i>mf</i>	9"
<i>f</i>	12"
<i>ff</i>	15"

TECHNIQUE

Approach

Before we strike the drum, great snare drumming begins with the look in our hands. Setting our hands up correctly will create a home base to reference stick angle and bead placement. You want the left thumb to be on top of the stick. The sticks should create a 90 degree angle between themselves at all times. We will strive to play with the back of the bead to maximize the surface area of the bead that strikes the drum. You should always strive to play with a "heavy hand" which requires whole hand contact on the stick, especially at the higher heights and slower tempos.

Left Hand

The primary aspect of the left hand revolves around the thumb being on top of the stick. This is important because it compensates for where the stick is held compared to the right hand. The right hand has a palm on top of the stick, allowing more weight to contribute to a controlled stroke. While the thumb is on top, we do not have the thumbnail facing straight up. The knuckle on the thumb should be resting between the first two joints on the index finger. More weight on top of

the stick equals less squeeze and more dead weight to stop the stick. It is important that we DO NOT roll the palm over so that it is facing upward. The LH thumb should be in a straight line with the elbow, as an extension of the arm. The arm does not roll over to expose the top of the forearm, but the wrist rotates up.

Right Hand

The primary aspect for the right hand is all about the angle of the palm in relation to the head, as well as the pad of thumb in relation to the index finger on the opposite side of the stick. The thumb will be placed roughly half-way between flat and vertical. The back fingers create pocket for the stick to rest in while thumb acts to brace the stick into the pocket. Do not add excess tension in the thumb and index finger. Right hand motion is not initiated from the front fulcrum, but from the wrist and guided from the back fingers. The relationship between ring finger/pinky and the wrist are crucial to ensure both consistency and relaxation.

Prep Stroke

In order to play together as a line, we must prep as a line not as individual players. The prep stroke is simply bringing the stick up in time along the bead path. At tempos up to 160, we prep on the eighth note before our entrance. At tempos 160 and above, we prep on the quarter note before our entrance. The prep stroke speed is the exact same up as it is coming down. The prep stroke should not be rigid and tense, but should be a relaxed "flick" up and is guiding by the back gripping point of the hand.

Playing

We will use a heavy hand (not a tight hand) approach to snare drumming. This allows us to maximize our sound quality and produce tone out of the instrument. Here are some steps to start you in the right direction:

- Relaxed, firm grip with whole hand contact on the stick, at all heights
- Playing from set position, not opening the back of the hand
- Full rebounded stroke at low heights, promoted by wrist knock
- Velocity

- The bead turns the wrist, not the other way around
- Do not extend the cup of the fingers
- Back fingers should be thought of as “elastic” they will retain their shape around the stick, but can contract and expand slightly
- Allowing a “break” in the wrist at low end

Set/Playing Position



Left hand angle noting back finger position on stick at full extension



Full extension both hands



Full extension in right noting grip in the back of the hand/back fingers

