

# 2024 Fall Farmington Audition Information

You have taken the first steps to becoming a member of the Farmington Phoenix Marching Percussion Ensemble! We are very excited to have you as part of our team. Here at Farmington, you will make life-long friends, memories, and be a part of the ever growing legacy of the Marching Phoenix.

This packet is meant to help prepare you for your amazing experience here at Farmington. Read all provided information carefully as it is meant for your benefit!

We are here to help. Don't be afraid to reach out with any questions you may have! You can contact our percussion staff at the emails below:

Ashton Allen (Percussion Director)

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## **Audition Dates:**

**Clinics - 04/23 & 25 -  
3:30-6:00**

**Auditions - 04/30 -  
03:30-6:00**



# PHILOSOPHY

## WE BELONG WITH THE BEST



### APPROACH

- Relaxed Velocity - sound quality at all dynamic levels, speed, endurance.
- Dexterity - where strength meets flexibility.
- Touch - flow, articulation (tap/accents control), musicality, feel.
- Independence or Interdependence - Understanding how each movement or independent stroke aids in your overall mallet playing.

### PISTON STROKE

- The starting and stopping point of the stroke are the same (with the exception of horizontal motion across the keyboard creating a Shift).
  - No wasted motion is created by a piston stroke.
  - You go straight down to play and straight up to return back to the original playing position.
- The stroke is relaxed yet precise, and it does not connect to the next stroke. ● When going from one note to another, we will use the **upstroke** of a piston stroke to travel to your next destination. We will refer to it as a “**checkmark**” type of motion.
- The main function of the stroke is to get you where you need to be sooner, which then allows you to play more accurately and with a better sound.

### LEGATO STROKE

- This is a more “general” stroke and will be used the most often within the mallet ensemble. The starting and stopping point of the stroke are still the same, however, the duration of the lift / prep after stroking is dramatically changed.
  - It’s just a relaxed, smooth, and connected stroke. When playing musical passages, the wrist creates a constant full range of motion to mimic a very slow, connected, stroke.
  - The stroke is relaxed yet precise, and it **slowly** connects to the next stroke.
- With a legato stroke, we will implement a **FLOAT**.
  - In the “float”, the initial down stroke is the same but the recovery is slower on the upstroke, creating a “slow-mo” movement upwards from the note.
  - The movement is lead by the mallet head—not the wrist—and should feel like you are slowly pulling every bit of sound possible out of the bar.
  - Most “floats” will have either a defined ending beat or continue the motion until the next note

### 2-MALLET GRIP

Divide the mallet shaft into thirds with your eyes. You will place the bottom third in the palm of your hand gripping the mallet with your pinky and ring fingers. Your index finger and thumb should line up directly on the third division of the mallet leaving approx. 2” of the mallet

sticking out of the back of your hand. The thumb and index finger should connect with the mallet at your first knuckle. A natural space should occur between the first and second and the thumb and index fingers - *Pulse Percussion*.

When gripping the mallet, the strength of the grip comes from the pinky, ring, and middle fingers. The pointer finger and thumb should remain relaxed on the mallet at all times for accuracy purposes only. The thumb and pointer should never feel pinched or tight.



#### **4-MALLET GRIP ( Stevens)**

The pinky is our “anchor” and must wrap all the way around the mallet providing the foundation for the grip. There should be minimal excess mallet protruding from the bottom of your pinky. The outer mallet should go up at about a 45 degree angle in relationship to the forearm. There is a delicate balance between gripping too tightly with the pinky and letting your outside mallet droop down.

Second, place the other mallet in the center palm of your hand just under your thumb muscle. Your middle finger is wrapped around the mallet, holding it **securely** into your palm/thumb muscle with the fingertip. Your index finger now acts as a shelf for the inside mallet, and the mallet should be able to rest without any pressure in your hand. This is probably the biggest foundation of your entire 4-mallet technique. The mallets should naturally set at the interval of a fifth.

Finally, place your thumb on the inside mallet directly over the first knuckle of your index finger. The thumb rests on top of the mallet and applies only the minimal amount of pressure to keep it in place. The thumb contacts the mallet with the fleshy part of the thumb, not the tip of the thumb (as seen below). **NO BENT THUMBS!** This will allow you to freely change intervals as well as maintain a relaxed grip. **TLDR:** take the front fulcrum from your 2-mallet playing and emulate it here.

#### **GRIP INFORMATION**

- Stable, consistent and focused grip that is not too tight or too loose. (Think of a balance between a secure, and consistent grip).
- Our 2-mallet and 4-mallet technique focuses on a front, mid, and back fulcrum. The hand will be closed in the back to allow for stability in our musical playing. This gives you the ability to play faster, more technical passages with ease (Remember to not grip too tightly—The grip is still

relaxed).

- The thumb and index finger create the front fulcrum.
- The middle finger and the palm of our hand create the mid fulcrum.



- The ring, pinky, and the palm of our hand creating the back fulcrum.
- Focus on a full range of motion from the start of the stroke to the end of the stroke.

### STICK HEIGHTS

Height	Related Dynamic	Angle from the Drum	Notes
1/2"	ppp	Tacet Angle	Grace Note Height
1"	pp	<0	Softest playing dynamic
3"	P	0	Default tap height. Mainly wrist, arms and fingers aid certain material
6"	mp	22.5	Default tenuto height. Mainly wrist, again arms and fingers support naturally when needed.
9"	mf	45	Arm starts to get more involved at this height. Same principles of wrist initiation apply.
12"	f	67.5	More arm, fingers open up more to aid flexibility.
15"	ff	90	Maxed wrist motion combined with open fingers (only about 1" from palm) and natural arm support.
18"	fff	112.5	Avoid "slamming"! Snares and quads will maintain 90° angle and add more arm for a more "visual volume" effect. Basses utilize more angle change for added distance from the head.

# COUNTDOWNS

Played without dynamics. Then with dynamics. There are two dynamic variations.

BOARDS

Dyn-1  
Dyn-2

*sim.*

BRD

5

BRD

9

3 3

BRD

13

*sim.*

BRD

17

BRD

19

3 3

# DIRT 2.0

(r)

Dyn-1

4

7

9

(r) (r)

First played without dynamics then with. This exercise starts on the RH and stays on the RH throughout. It is meant to work through fluidity around the board as well as work on metric shifts.

This exercise is meant to be played in all 12 major AND minor scales. (When determining a minor scale, use a major scale, count three notes down, and start on that note. All notes played the same will create a minor scale. For example, in C major, three notes down from C is A. If you play a 'C' major scale, but start and finish on 'A' you will have played an A minor scale. This is true of all minor scales.

# ARPEGGIOS

BOARDS

(L)

(r) (r)

This exercise is intended to be played in all scales. Either with breaks between each scale or continuously in chromatic fashion. This exercise starts on the LH, with a double stroke for the turnaround.

# B&B (bread and butter)

Boards

Musical notation for the 'Boards' exercise, measures 1-4. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The exercise consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands, with the right hand playing a higher interval than the left hand. The pattern is: G4-A4-B4-C5 (right), F#4-G4-A4-B4 (left).

5

BRD.

Musical notation for the 'BRD.' exercise, measures 5-8. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The exercise consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands. The pattern is: G4-A4-B4-C5 (right), F#4-G4-A4-B4 (left).

9

BRD.

Musical notation for the 'BRD.' exercise, measures 9-12. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The exercise consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands. The pattern is: G4-A4-B4-C5 (right), F4-G4-A4-B4 (left). The exercise ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

This exercise is meant as a base for the variations. Each measure indicates the chords to be played with the variations. The variations are designed to work on all the core elements of four mallet playing. With dedicated practice this is a very valuable tool to help a developing 4-mallet instrumentalist.

When comfortable with the intervals as written, the performer may feel inclined to change the interval to whatever they want so as to increase the 'difficulty' of the exercise and increase the range of skillsets developed.



# B&B Variations

Marimba

1 L-R(Double Verticals)      2 R-L(Double Verticals)

Mar.

4

3 (single independents)

3      2      4      1

Mar.

7

4 (inside/outside)

5 (odds/evens)

3/2      1/4      1/3      2/4

Mar.

11

6 (in-out)

7 (odd/even)

Mar.

13

8 (in-out)

9 (out-in)

10 (odd-even)

11 (even-odd)

3 2 4 1      1 4 2 3      1 3 2 4      2 4 1 3

Mar.

17

12 Double Lateral(In)

13 Double Lateral(Out)

14 Triple Lateral

1 2 4 3      2 1 3 4      2 1 2 3 3 4 3      3