



University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Vaquero Marching Band Fall 2025 Welcome Letter

Thank you for your interest in joining The Vaquero Marching Band Drumline. We are all thrilled to have you be a part of the 2025 edition of this program! In this packet you will find various exercises used throughout the year.

If there any questions about what you find in this packet, or about the audition process, please to do not hesitate to contact me! You may reach me at francis.favis@utrgv.edu .

The faculty are all looking forward to a great year, best of luck in your preparation!

Sincerely,

Dr. Francis Favis

Assistant Professor Percussion, Drumline Coordinator

UTRGV – August 2025

Philosophy Statement

The marching percussion program at UTRGV creates a learning environment that is conducive to a high level of musical performance, while representing the Vaquero Marching Band and The University in the most dignified manner.

Approach

Before you play...

1. Posture

Before playing a single note, it is important that we set ourselves up to be successful through proper posture. The body should be relaxed. Stand up straight, but without tension in your shoulders or other parts of your body. Every person is built differently, so make sure the body is placed at the correct position in relation to the drum. Someone with long arms for example, positioned too closely to the drum will introduce unnecessary tension in the arms. Make sure to breathe! Holding your breath will not help you play better, in fact the opposite. Your muscles need oxygen to function for the long periods we will be drumming.

2. Timing

As the primary sonic form of tempo for the band, it is pertinent to have a good internal pulse. Practicing with a metronome is a must, given the fact that over 20 individuals will have to play together. Every individual intending to audition needs to practice with a metronome. There are free apps or physical devices, take advantage of them. Get creative! Remove beats, play against subdivisions you're not used to. Rhythmic integrity goes hand in hand with this and remember: rudiments are rhythms! Stickings should not affect the underlying rhythms. In addition, get accustomed to **marking time**. If you are unfamiliar with this concept, all it is, is moving our feet in time with a pulse, typically the quarter note pulse, **starting with the left foot**. (E.g. Beat 1, Left foot, Beat 2 Right foot, etc.) This is a very important skill, as we will be moving while we play.

3. Sound Quality

The relaxed approach to our posture should translate to how we play the drum. Having a relaxed grip on the stick, as well as the rest of the arm and shoulders, allows the stick to resonate freely, generating a full, warm sound. You always want to work with gravity as much as you can, do not squeeze and force the stick to do what you want. Instead, let the mechanics and weight of a good legato stroke do that for you.

4. Listening

Your ears are valuable tools on this activity. With a large drumline such as this, having your ears "open" to your neighbor is crucial. **Active listening** is integral to achieving a balanced and blended sound. Always be aware of your sonic surroundings, just as you are with your physical ones. Hearing and listening are two different things, strive for the latter. In addition, this activity is hard on the ears. I highly encourage ear protection via earplugs. Whichever route you go, whether no earplugs or with earplugs, just be consistent, so your ears can adjust either way.

Behind the instrument...

5. General Feel

As outlined above, we aim to play with as little tension as possible. The goal is to be efficient with how we play the instrument, while still producing a quality of sound. Letting the implements and instruments resonate at their maximum will help generate a big sound. Gravity does much of the work: let the weight of the implements and your hand/arms bring it into the instrument, like a book falling off a table. The drum will take care of the rest, provided you allow for rebound with a nice legato sound. The hands should never squeeze. The grip should be firm but without tension: **contact without pressure**.

6. The Grip

Snares (in the right hand), tenors and basses will play with matched grip. The main area of focus will be the Index Finger, Thumb, and Middle Finger: the "Power Trio". Depending on the material, the exact pressure will be either more towards the front (index+thumb) or the middle (thumb+middle) of the hand. Be acquainted with all three zones of your hand, front, middle, and back. As stated above, the grip should have contact without pressure, with the stick close to the hand, and no fingers flying loose. The optimal balance point is about 1/3 of the way up the stick from the butt end. This is where that front fulcrum will sit. For the **Bass Drums**, the mallet will be held farther down towards the butt, so no slack is visible. For Snares and Tenors, we want a 45 degree angle of our hands, not flat with palm parallel with the ground, or with the thumb pointing straight up, right in the middle. For **cymbals**, unlike in a concert percussion setting, the hand goes through the strap, with the thin part towards the bell situated in the webbing between the thumb and index, after the hand is pushed through and "looped" around.

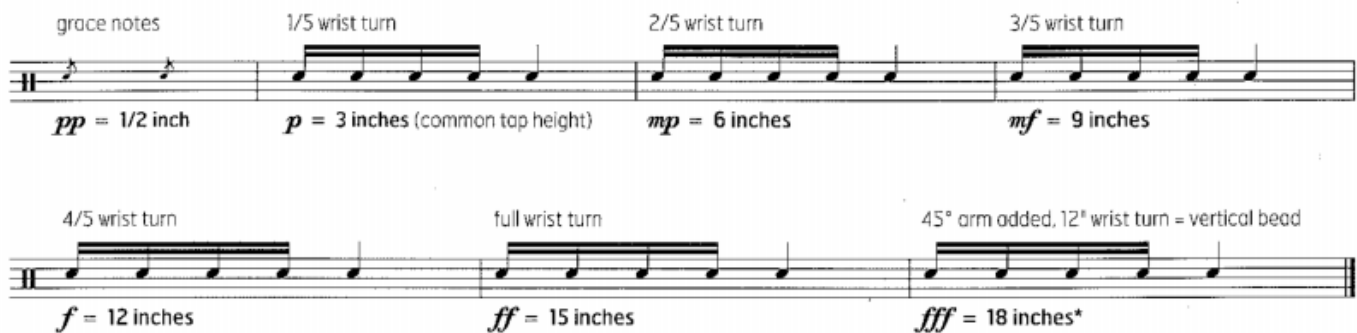
7. Positioning behind the instrument

Start with arms relaxed at your side, then pivot up from the elbow. There should not be lift from the shoulders. There should be slight downward angle to the forearm into the drum head (**For bass drum**, your forearm should be parallel with the ground, with a slight inward angle of your mallet head to the instrument). Generally you want to be positioned far enough from the instrument that your elbows do not "chicken wing". They should be about in line with your torso towards the back, but not too far in front or behind. **For Cymbals**, depending on the technique you will playing, the

positioning of your cymbals will vary, including around your belly area or up by your face. Generally, when not playing, the cymbals will be down at the sides with the edge of the cymbal facing forward.

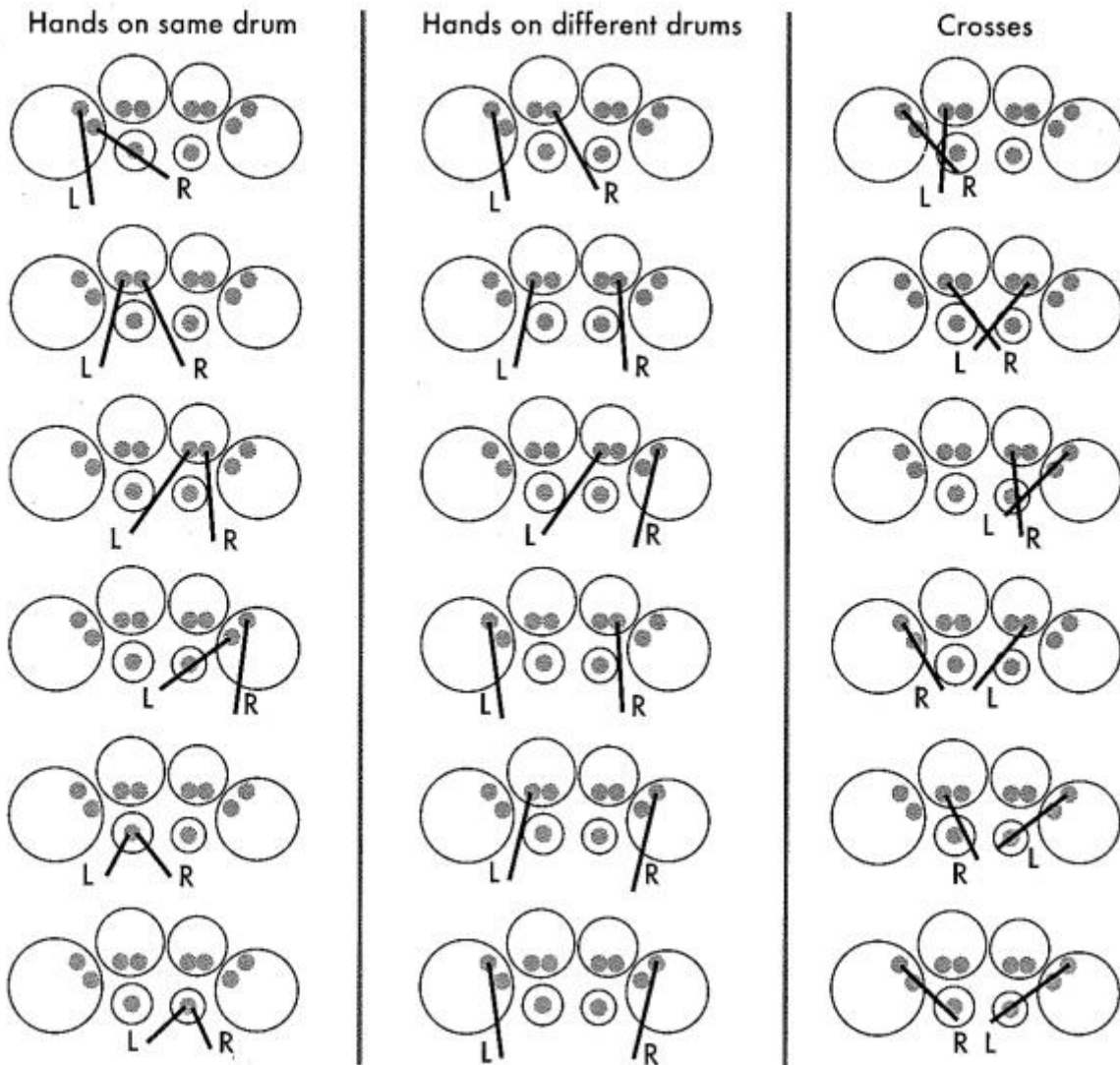
8. The Stroke

In general, each stroke should be initiated by the wrist, with the bead of the implement tracing an arc like path. The amount of arm utilized will depend mainly on the volume and tempo of whatever material is being played. The 4 basic strokes we will use are the Full Stroke, Down (staccato) stroke, upstrokes, and taps. These should all be approached similarly, with the differences being the starting and ending positions. Full Strokes, should start up, rebound, and finish up. Down strokes start up, and finish down. Upstrokes start down and finish up. Taps start down and finish down. The fingers should not squeeze at the apex or bottom of a given stroke, instead it is the wrist that controls the flow of motion. **For cymbals**, how you play the cymbal will dictate the technique, most techniques are tied to a specific sound. For example a hihat sound uses a more wrist oriented technique in one hand, while a regular crash uses more arm, with both cymbals moving into each other.



* Not an exact science.

Playing Zone Reference Chart



Expectations

- Placement Auditions

Coming in with a positive attitude, with a willingness to learn and improve, is the right way to approach things. You may be asked to do things in ways you are not used to doing, and having an open mind makes this process much easier. It is also good practice to have multiple perspectives, even if you know all of the basics.

- **Rehearsals**

Given the time constraints of a normal performance season, every effort must be made to maximize the amount of quality, on task rehearsal time within each session. As a result, the rehearsal environment must be completely free of extraneous noise, talking, or disruptive behavior. Be professional. Move with a purpose. Our work ethic is absolutely vital to our success, and any negativity brought by one member will disrupt the flow of the whole section. This is a fun activity, but only if the work is put in first!

New music may be distributed frequently during the season. Every member must come to the first rehearsal of a new show having looked at the music ahead of time. This is crucial to our success as a full line. Showing up unprepared is detrimental to the group and disrespectful to your peers who took the time to prepare their parts. Additionally, memorization deadlines will be set for shows and must be met to ensure preparation for a performance. Throughout the year, there will be situations when there will be a very short amount of time to put together a performance. Every effort will be made to look at music well enough in advance before it will be rehearsed in a full band setting, but there will be numerous occasions when you will have to sight-read parts, and clean them to performance level in a reduced amount of time. It is expected that in these situations that members will put forth the necessary extra effort to ensure the success of themselves, the section, and the band.

- **Performances**

The marching band performs regularly in front of fans. As a result, all aspects of the drumline presence must exude the highest levels of professionalism, musicianship, and maturity. Any public performance, regardless of length or scope, will be approached in complete and total seriousness. As a member of the VMB Drumline, you will be expected to be alert, focused, on-task at all times during performance, whether that be on the field, in the stands or in a parade. Remember, someone is always watching and listening. Assume that every impression is the first. Above all, it is the goal of the entire Band Staff that students have a positive experience, no matter their level of involvement, with the VMB. The percussion program is only one aspect of a much larger entity. As a member of the organization, you will undoubtedly identify with these values, and will do your part to help preserve and maintain the spirit of this organization.

Notation Key

F. Favis



SnareLine

Buzz

Crush Buzz

Rimshot

Gock

Ping

Rim

Stick Click

Stick on Shot

tick

Rim Knock/
Cross Shot

TenorLine

Spock

1

2

3

4

Crossover

Rimshot

Rim

Stick Click

Spank

Buzz

Crush Buzz

BassLine

1

2

3

4

5

Unison

Rim Click

Buzz

Crush Buzz

Mute (opp. hand)

Cymbal Line

1

2

3

4

Unison

1+2

3+4

1+3 Odds

2+4 Evens

Normal Crash

Hihat

Sizzle

Crash Choke

Fusion

Ting

Smash

8-8-16

Traditional
arr. Favis

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

Cymbal Line

HiHat

Normal

CrashChoke

Tenor Around Pattern 2

R R R R

R R R R

RH all way through

Unison

R L R

5

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

HiHat

Normal

CrashChoke

Normal

L R L R L R

Variations: Dynamics / Crescendos / Decrescendo / (for bass) 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, split

Accent Tap

Arr. Favis

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

HiHat

mbal Line

f

Double Beat

10

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

mf

Sweep Variation : Same Stickings

Normal

Crash Choke

Traditional Arr. Favis

The image shows a musical score for a drum set, consisting of four staves: SnareLine, TenorLine, BassLine, and Cymbal Line. The music is written in 2/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte), as well as articulation like accents and a hiHat section.

SnareLine: The first staff shows a series of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign and a final measure. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The notation includes the letters R, L, R, L, R, R, L, L, R, R, L, L, and ETC.

TenorLine: The second staff shows a series of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign and a final measure. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The notation includes the letters R, L, R, L, R, R, L, L, R, R, L, L, and ETC.

BassLine: The third staff shows a series of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign and a final measure. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The notation includes the letters R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, and ETC.

Cymbal Line: The fourth staff shows a series of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign and a final measure. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The notation includes the letters R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, and ETC. There is also a section labeled "hiHat" with a "+" sign and a "Normal" section with a ">" sign.

Triplet Roll

6

Snare

4/4

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R L ETC

mf

2/4

Tenors

4/4

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R L ETC

mf

2/4

Bass Dr

4/4

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R R R L R L R L R L R L R R R R R R R R R R R

mf

2/4

Cym.L

4/4

Normal

hiHat

f

2/4

Perc Arr. by F. Favis

[illegible]

22

D

Snare

Tenors

R L L R R R L R B B B B etc.

Bass Dr

Cym.L

27

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

Detailed description: This musical score block contains measures 27 through 32. The notation is arranged in four staves: Snare, Tenors, Bass Dr, and Cym.L. Measure 27 starts with a '27' in the top left. The Snare staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with many eighth and sixteenth notes, some marked with accents (>) and slurs. The Tenors staff has a similar rhythmic pattern with accents and slurs. The Bass Dr staff shows a simpler pattern with eighth notes and rests, including some notes marked with 'x' and slurs. The Cym.L staff has a few notes with accents and slurs. Measures 28-32 continue these patterns with various rhythmic variations, including triplets in measure 32 marked with a '3' and a slur. The notation is precise, with many notes having accents and slurs, indicating specific performance techniques.

UTRGV Alma Mater

Perc. Arr. by F. Favis

♩ = 112

A **B** **C** **D**

8 8 8 7 6 6

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

Cymbal Line

mp *f* *p* *f*

34 rit. ♩ = 80

E

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

fp *f* *ff* *ff*

37

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

fp *ff* *fp* *ff*

6 
R R L R R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L R R R R R R L R R R L R R R R L R L R B B

B

R R L R L L R R L R L R R R L R L L R R L R L R

C

RLRL ETC RRL R RRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL

Repeat as needed

Cheddar

F. Favis

♩ = 124

A

♩ = 124

A

Solo Tap off

f All In

R L R L R L L R L R L R L R L R B R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L B R L R L R L R L

6

6 

B

B

R L R R L R R L L R L R

R L R R L R R L L R L R

R L R R L R R L L R L R

R L R R L R R L L R L R

C

[illegible]

Repeat as needed

♩ = 124

A

Solo Tap off *f* All In

R L R L R L L R L R L R L R L R R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

6

R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R R R

B

R R L R L R R R L R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

C

R L L L R L R L L L R L R R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Repeat as needed

♩ = 124

A

Solo Tap off *f* Normal All In

9

B

9

C

Repeat as needed

V25

F. Favis

A ♩ = 124

f

RLRL RLRLRL RL RLRL RLLRLLR RL ETC

5 **B**

RLRL RLRRLLR RL RL L RLRRLLR L RR L RLLRLLR RL RL L RLRRLLR L

9

RLRLRLRLRL RL L RLRRLLR L RR L RLLRLLR RL RL L RLRRLLR L RLRLRLRLRL

C

RLRLRL ETC

f

RLRLRLRL

D

B B ETC ETC B B ETC B B ETC B B

27

ETC B R L R L R L *f* R L R L R R L R L

31

R L R L RLRLRLRL R L R L R L ETC *ff* R L R L R

V25

F. Favis

A ♩ = 124

f *mf*

1. 2.

B RMCLICK

5

11

C

R L B B B R L R L R R L R R L L R R L L R ETC

17

D RMCLICK

f

23

f

28

f

31

ff

V25

F. Favis

The musical score is presented in a single system with five staves, each containing rhythmic notation and dynamic markings. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs, with dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, and *f*. The score is divided into sections labeled A, B, C, and D. Section A starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 124$. Section B includes a repeat sign with first and second endings. Section C features a key signature change to one flat. Section D includes a key signature change to two flats. The score concludes with a final measure marked with a double bar line and a fermata.

V25

F. Favis

A $\text{♩} = 124$
HiHat

B

C

D

4

27

Crash Choke

f

grooVe sheet

F. Favis

♩ = 124

Groove One Repeat 4x
Snare enter 2nd time
Quad + Cymbals enter 3rd time

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

Cymbal Line

R L R L R L R

ETC

R L R L R L R L

ETC

Groove Two Repeat 4x
Snares: 3rd+4th time, accents = rimshots in 1st 3 bars
Cymbals: 3rd+4th Time, crashes on all quarter notes

5

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

R L R L

R L R L L R R R L L

R L L R R L R L

Groove Three Repeat indefinitely
4th measure, take turns taking a 4 beat solo
On Signal from Center Snare, take the "Last Time" ending instead.

9

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr

Cym.L

R L R B R R L R L R L R L R R R L R L L ETC

R L R L R L R L ETC

R L R R R R L L ETC

Last Time