Large Ensemble Placement Auditions  
(Percussion)

SPRING 2022

Each semester, all percussion majors are required to audition for placement in large ensembles (orchestra, wind ensemble, and concert band). Approximately one month before the semester begins, students will be given a packet (in PDF form) of standard orchestral/band excerpts for students to prepare on their own. Students will perform these excerpts for a faculty jury consisting of at least 2 percussion faculty members, likely more. The auditions will be screened, meaning the jury will not see, only hear, each performer. The students will receive a score based on their preparation and performance (along with comments) and be placed in ensembles based on the outcome of the studio audition. Those that place higher will have first choice of ensembles over those that place lower. These results are also often used to decide matters such as part assignments, extra performance opportunities, ensemble tour personnel, etc.

Classical Audition Material

Snare Drum
- Etude 20 (from Method for Caisse-Claire) by Jacques Delecluse
- Star Wars - I. “Main Title” by John Williams (m. 4 - m. 56)

Xylophone
- Third Symphony - William Schuman (m. 230 through m. 245)

Bells
- The Magic Flute (No. 8, Finale from Act I) by Amadeus Mozart

Vibraphone
- “Cool” from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein (m. 58 through m. 79)

Timpani
- Carnival Overture by Antonín Dvorák (entire piece)

Tambourine
- Roman Carnival Overture by Hector Berlioz (reh. 16 to the end)

Multiple Percussion
- Symphony for Band (No. 6) by Vincent Persichetti
  (3rd percussion from m. 1 through m. 20)

How to Properly Prepare an Excerpt 101

First, listen to at least three different versions of each work in its original form (no arrangements, transcriptions, alternate versions, etc). Make note of any important information such as tempo, dynamics, timbre (mallet choices), articulation (especially important for timpani, cymbals, etc), feel, phrasing, and so on. If you find different interpretations choose the way you will play based on what is most often heard or expected (and secondly, personal preference). Try to listen to reputable recordings (ie, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, etc). The second step is to learn the excerpts methodically and meticulously - there is no room for error in an orchestral audition. During this time period it is important to address technical concerns you may have with your playing. Take a look inside your playing and see what is stopping you from playing a certain passage the way you would like. Fundamental skills are paramount in successfully preparing such an audition. Finally, begin playing along to your favorite recordings while trying to carefully fit your playing into the orchestra. This is an important step not to be skipped. Repeat all steps and approach each passage from as many different angles as possible.
No. 8, Finale
from Act I of the Opera
The Magic Flute

W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)
Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* ("Cool")
3rd Percussion

SYMPHONY FOR BAND
(Symphony No. 69)

VINCENT PERSICHETTI
Op. 69

Adagio \( \frac{d}{= 69} \)

Allegro \( \frac{d}{= 138} \)

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