



# RISE

PERFORMING ARTS

2025 FRONT ENSEMBLE PACKET  
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Rise Percussion 2025 Front Ensemble Fundamentals

# Welcome

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for the Rise Front Ensemble. The information and fundamentals in this packet are designed to allow us to start with the same mindset and approach and to help you have a successful audition process.

It is the understanding that we all come from different backgrounds and philosophies. The philosophies outlined in this packet are what we believe creates OUR sound and OUR identity. This packet just reflects our way of doing things. Always be open to new ideas and learn as much as possible.

Keep in mind that you are auditioning at all times! Be professional and stay mentally engaged. The staff is looking for players who are passionate, humble, musically intuitive, and most importantly: teachable.

**For any questions regarding the content of this packet please email:**

Joe Hills (Rise Percussion Front Ensemble Caption Head) - [Joe@risearts.org](mailto:Joe@risearts.org)

## WHAT TO EXPECT/BRING

We will spend most of our time during audition camps in full ensemble or sectional settings and Staff will pull individuals out of the group to play your solo audition. We will focus mostly on the exercises in this packet but may also throw exercises at you on the fly to see how you adapt and to test your mental fortitude. At any point during the audition you may be asked to play by yourself or demonstrate something. Keep in mind that this is not meant to humiliate you, but to allow us to see how you do. You may be asked to play because we want to use you as an example of how to do something correctly!

Things you should bring with you for audition camps:

1. **Your own drumsticks/mallets** - feel free to use whichever implement you feel most comfortable with. We want an accurate gauge of how you sound when you're most comfortable.
2. **A practice pad** - you likely will not be on an instrument the entire time. Even if you aren't on an instrument, you should still be drumming.
3. **Earplugs** - it is very important to protect our hearing at all times.
4. **Appropriate dress for physical activity** - there will be a movement portion to auditions.
5. **Water bottle** - Hydration is essential for physical and mental functioning.

Musically, you will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Technique / Approach
- Rhythmic integrity (accuracy / timekeeping / pulse control)
- Sound quality of all stroke motions at all dynamic levels
- Adaptability/ability to learn and adjust quickly
- Musical Alignment with the Ensemble

Visually, you will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Posture
- Movement quality/fluidity
- Presence/confidence
- Adaptability/ability to learn and adjust quickly
- Visual Alignment with the Ensemble

## **MALLET AUDITIONS**

Be prepared to perform the following in a group and/or individual setting:

- All 2-mallet technique and exercises in this packet
- All 4-mallet technique and exercises in this packet
- Audition excerpt (handed out at auditions)
- Solo/excerpt of your choice
- All mallet candidates will be asked to try different things, add/remove dynamics, learn new parts/patterns on the spot, transpose into different keys, etc. Flexibility and adaptability are key.

## **DRUMSET AUDITIONS**

Be prepared to perform the following in a group and/or individual setting:

- A variety of styles to accompany every exercise in this packet
- All percussion exercises in this packet
- Ensemble Tunes (handed out at auditions)
- 2+ different versions of a variety of styles/patterns, including but not limited to:
  - Rock
  - Funk
  - Metal
  - Hip-Hop
  - Asymmetrical Meter grooves ( $\frac{5}{8}$ ,  $\frac{7}{8}$ , etc...)
- Improvise and solo in every style
- You may be asked to sight-read
- You may be asked to demonstrate music taught by rote

## **SYNTHESIZER/GUITAR/BASS/AUX PERCUSSION AUDITIONS**

Be prepared to perform the following in a group and/or individual setting:

- All keyboard parts to exercises in this packet
- Solo/excerpt of your choice
- Ensemble Tunes (handed out at auditions)
- Improvise and solo in a variety of styles
- You may be asked to sight-read
- You may be asked to demonstrate music taught by rote

# Approach

At Rise Percussion, we like to think about our approach to playing as relaxed but deliberate while achieving a full and warm tone. While drumming is a full body experience, we strive to be as efficient as possible by creating the best sounds with the greatest sense of ease (least amount of tension). If you watch how a drum set player approaches their instrument; the smoothness and fluidity to their playing is essentially what we are going for. There will be clear guidelines to grip, stroke initiation, and stick movement to help our ensemble gain a uniformed sound and approach. In the end, we believe that the player should feel the most comfortable in order to make performing feel as natural and authentic as possible.

## TIMING

Timing is one of the most important aspects that we will develop as a battery section. When **practicing it is imperative that we always play with a metronome.** Building a good sense of internal time is necessary for the performer to contribute fully to the ensemble.

## SOUND

Many factors can affect sound! The main contributors into creating our sound are VELOCITY, and WEIGHT. Velocity is the speed at which the stick travels towards the instrument. If we use too much velocity we will most likely get a harsh sound that is hard to blend player to player. If the stick/mallet travels too slowly the sound will be too light or thin and also will be difficult to blend. Weight is simply that, the natural weight of your limbs. This refers to how much of that natural weight there is behind the stroke. Allowing the contribution of natural weight allows sounds at all dynamic levels to be full and will ensure that the changes in stick height reflect changes in sound.

Once we get into a section or ensemble setting we begin to focus on the BALANCE and BLEND of the ensemble. Balance refers to volume and blend refers to quality. Typically these 2 terms coincide with each other. Players have to be able to use their ears just as well as their hands and be able to actively evaluate their sound and how it fits with the players around them

## **STROKE & STROKE TYPES**

All mallets should play with a Piston Stroke at all times. The Piston Stroke allows the performer to prepare for the dynamic and playing position of the next note providing more flexibility and finesse. To execute an effective Piston Stroke, the mallet-head moves directly from the contact point of the previous note to the exact vertical/horizontal alignment for the next note, traveling the shortest distance possible. It is imperative that the performer remain as relaxed as possible while also moving quickly and efficiently.

For all mallets and drums, the stroke will initiate from the wrist. This doesn't mean that the stroke will be isolated to just the wrist. Depending on the stroke and the passage that is being played it will take all 3 muscle groups; the fingers, the wrist, and the arm. We will allow these all to move when needed.

For all drums, It is important to know and understand the 4 main stroke types so that we can accurately manipulate the sticks during any given passage. The 4 main stroke types are: full stroke, down stroke, tap stroke, and up stroke. The full and tap strokes are essentially the same stroke, just at different dynamics. These strokes will start and end in the same location. A down stroke should feel the same as a full stroke, but after making contact with the drum head the wrist will control the rebound so the stick stops at a lower height/dynamic. Remember not to squeeze the fingers to stop the stick, merely stop the wrist from rebounding to its' original starting height. An up stroke is the reverse; it begins from the same height as a tap stroke and rebounds, with the help of the wrist, to a higher height.

## **GRIP & PLAYING POSITION**

### **2 Mallet Technique**

Grip the mallet with your back three fingers near the bottom of the mallet shaft (about 1" of shaft out of the hand past the pinky). The 3rd knuckle of the pointer finger and pad of the thumb should line up directly across from one another to form the "fulcrum". The entire hand should remain relaxed with just enough tension to hold the mallet and initiate the stroke from the wrist.

### **4 Mallet Technique**

We will use Stevens grip on both Vibes and Marimba. Leigh Howard Stevens designed this grip to be the most efficient for stroke consistency and interval changing. We will match our technique to the center player(s), however, the basic mechanisms will be the same as described in Stevens' book, "Method of Movement".

For consistency and ease of describing permutations, we will number the mallets (1-4) from low to high with 1 being the lowest (leftmost) mallet and mallet 4 being the highest (rightmost) mallet.

*The following process is the same for both hands:*

- grip the outer mallet (mallets 1 & 4) with your pinky and ring finger so the mallet is protruding from the webbing between your ring and middle fingers. There should be minimal excess mallet beyond the exit point of your hand (pinky side). There should be minimal 'squeeze' in this grip. Allow the mallet to rest in place without any pressure in your hand.
- place the back of the inner mallet (mallets 2 & 3) in the palm of your hand just under your thumb muscle. Rest the mallet on the 3rd knuckle of the pointer ("the perch") for and the mallet should be able to rest without any pressure in your hand. Relax the pad of your thumb to rest on the shaft on top of the perch. The pointer and thumb form your "fulcrum" for the inner mallet and must remain relaxed at all times. The tip of your middle finger will anchor the inner mallet into your palm/thumb muscle.



# Exercises

On the following pages are the exercises that will be used as part of our front ensemble audition process. Prepare everything in this packet with a metronome. Additional variations, combinations, or structures will also be presented during the auditions. Please come prepared to play not only what is on the page, but anything utilizing or building upon the pieces included below.



Rise Percussion 2025 Front Ensemble Fundamentals

2

**Dirt** - All Major and minor keys

♩ = 70-210

1

Kbd.

Perc.

R L --> R L R R L R L L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R R L L R R L L

4

Kbd.

Perc.

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

7

Kbd.

Perc.

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

**Mud** - All Major and minor keys

♩ = 70-210

1

Kbd.

Perc.

4

Kbd.

Perc.

7

Kbd.

Perc.

*p* < *f*

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**1 Timing**

Kbd. Perc.

1 2 3 4

**5**

Kbd. Perc.

5 6 7 8

**9**

Kbd. Perc.

9 10 11 12

**1 Diatonic 7th Chords (A Minor 7s)**

Kbd.

1 2 3 4

**6**

Kbd.

5 6 7 8

**11**

Kbd.

9 10 11 12

**1 Suspended**

Kbd.

1 2 3 4

**5**

Kbd.

5 6 7 8

4 **4-MALLET PERMUTATIONS** (Substitute for Block Chords in Diatonic 7th Chords & Suspended)

1 13-24 24-13 14-23 23-14

Kbd.

**Single Independence**

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

Kbd.

5 3-2-4-1 3-1-4-2 4-1-3-2 4-2-3-1

Kbd.

**Double Laterals**

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

Kbd.

5 4-3-2-1 4-3-1-2 4-1-2-3 4-2-1-3

Kbd.

9 2-1-3-4 2-1-4-3 2-3-4-1 2-4-3-1

Kbd.

**Triple Laterals**


1 "inside" "outside" "outside/inside"


Kbd.


4 "inside/outside" "up" "down"


Kbd.

1 **Broccoli - 4's (Stock)**


Kbd.   
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2

Kbd.   
4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3

Kbd.   
7 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3

Kbd.   
10 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2

Kbd.   
13 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3

Kbd.   
16 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2

Kbd.   
19 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 1 4 3 2 1

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6

1 **Broccoli - 3's**

Kbd.

L 3 4 L 3 4 L 3 4 L 3 4 3 4 1 3 4 1 3 4 1 3 4 1 R 1 2 R 1 2 R 1 2 R 1 2

Detailed description: This block contains the first measure of the piece. It is written for keyboard in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes, and the accompaniment consists of chords. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1-4 and letters L/R below the notes.

4

Kbd.

4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 L 3 4 L 3 4 3 4 1 3 4 1 R 1 2 R 1 2 4 2 3 4 2 3

Detailed description: This block contains the fourth measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3, L 3 4 L 3 4 3 4 1 3 4 1, R 1 2 R 1 2, 4 2 3 4 2 3.

7

Kbd.

R 2 1 R 2 1 R 2 1 R 2 1 3 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 L 4 3 L 4 3 L 4 3 L 4 3

Detailed description: This block contains the seventh measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: R 2 1 R 2 1 R 2 1 R 2 1, 3 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4, L 4 3 L 4 3 L 4 3 L 4 3.

10

Kbd.

4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 R 2 1 R 2 1 3 1 4 3 2 1 4 L 4 1 L 4 1 4 3 2 4 3 2

Detailed description: This block contains the tenth measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2, R 2 1 R 2 1 3 1 4 3 2 1 4, L 4 1 L 4 1 4 3 2 4 3 2.

13

Kbd.

L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3 L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3 L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3

Detailed description: This block contains the thirteenth measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3, L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3, L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3.

16

Kbd.

L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3 R 2 1 3 2 1 4 L 4 1 4 3 2 R 2 1 3 2 1 4 L 4 1 4 3 2

Detailed description: This block contains the sixteenth measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: L 3 4 3 4 1 R 1 2 4 2 3, R 2 1 3 2 1 4, L 4 1 4 3 2, R 2 1 3 2 1 4, L 4 1 4 3 2.

19

Kbd.

R 2 1 3 2 1 4 L 4 1 4 3 2 R 2 1 3 2 1 4 L 4 1 4 3 2 L

Detailed description: This block contains the nineteenth measure. The musical notation continues with eighth notes and chords. The fingering sequence is: R 2 1 3 2 1 4, L 4 1 4 3 2, R 2 1 3 2 1 4, L 4 1 4 3 2, L.

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**Broccoli - 5's** 7

1 Kbd.   
1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1

3 Kbd.   
3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3

5 Kbd.   
1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 3 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3 4 3 1 2 3

7 Kbd.   
4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4

9 Kbd.   
2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2

11 Kbd.   
4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2 1 2 4 3 2

13 Kbd.   
1 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 3 1 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 3 1 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3

15 Kbd.   
1 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 3 1 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 3 2 3 4 3 1 3 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 3

17 Kbd.   
4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2

19 Kbd.   
4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 4 2 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 2 1



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8 **1 Broccoli - 6's**

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Kbd.

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

Parabuilder

1 **A**

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

R r L l R r l | R r L l R r l | R r l R r L l | R r l R r L l R r

5

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

L l R r L l r | L l R r L l r | L l r L l R r | L l r L l R r L l

9 **B**

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

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 L l | R l r l R l r L r l R l r

13

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

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 l R l r | L r l r L r l R l r L r l

17 **C**

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

R r r L l l R r r l l | R r r L l l R r r l l | R r r l l R r r L l l | R r r l l R r r L l l R r r

21

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$

L l l R r r L l l r r | L l l R r r L l l r r | L l l r r L l l R r r | L l l r r L l l R r r L l l

1 **D**

Perc.  $\frac{7}{8}$

R l r r L r l l R l r r l l | R l r r L r l l R l r r l l | R l r r l l R l r r L r l l

4

Perc.  $\frac{9}{8}$   $\frac{7}{8}$

R l r r l l R l r r L r l l R l r r | L r l l R l r r L r l l r r | L r l l R l r r L r l l r r

7

Perc.  $\frac{9}{8}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

L r l l r r L r l l R l r r | L r l l r r L r l l R l r r L r l l | R