2006 Technical Notes

Stroke Style:

There are two basic strokes that we use to play all variations of drumming:

Rebound Stroke (Legato):

Like it sounds, this is a stroke that comes off of the head with as much velocity and height as it strikes the head with. (Similar to dribbling a basketball).

Downstroke:

This type of stroke does NOT rebound after contact with the head. Without adding tension or over-squeezing the stick, simply stop the stick from rebounding after contact. With matched grip, your back fingers will be the agent that eliminates the upstroke. With traditional left, your top fingers (pointer and middle) will be the responsible agent.

Rebound Stroke (Low Velocity vs. High Velocity):

*High Velocity= Lots of height or lots of speed or combination
Low Velocity= Little height or little speed or combination

If you are playing rebound strokes at **high velocities**, it is important to allow your stick to come off of the palm. ALWAYS maintain contact with ALL of your fingers ON the stick. But, at higher velocities, it is important to let the stick leave the palm. This allows the stick to pivot freely at the fulcrum, letting the efficient mechanics of the stroke take over (like a bouncing ball).

Fulcrum=the pivot point of your stroke (or any lever).

At higher velocities your first finger and thumb compose your fulcrum. Traditional left hand is the crease of the thumb.

If you are playing rebound strokes at **low velocities**, it is important to keep the stick into the palm. All fingers on the stick, and stick into the palm. Yes! This eliminates your use of the "front" fulcrum. At this point your fulcrum has transitioned back to your wrist. Most play at 3" requires the use of your wrist as the fulcrum.
This should NOT be something that is tense or rigid. Make sure you view your wrist as a "well oiled hinge." Very loose and flexible, allowing the stick to have a natural rebound at 3".

You might ask, "what about **medium velocity??**" And that is where it becomes less cut and dry. A "spectrum" exists from low

to high velocity playing where you will have to determine how far away from the palm you let the stick play from. Using high and low velocity playing guidelines as your ending points, the in-between do exist as well. (This will be better demonstrated in person!)

The Importance of Stroke Style:

It is hard for most young men and women to appreciate the importance of being able to play "eights" perfectly. No joke, it is the most important exercise any line can play. The quality and control of your rebound strokes will determine how your play EVERYTHING else. If you have an awkward rebound stroke, I guarantee that you'll have trouble with double beats. And if double beats, diddles. So that can go ahead and include paradiddles, paradiddle-diddles…cheeses, flam drags…French 3s…hertas, erts,.. You get the point. This fact goes doubly true for tenor players! Not only do you have to master the stroke style, but you have to master that stroke style as it relates to horizontal motion across 6 drums. Eights is your best tool to establishing that fluidity. Take it seriously!

Also, never underestimate the importance of quality 3" (low end) strokes. If you take a look at cadence, onfield, and show literature, it is probably the most common height that you'll play times 3! Think about it…tap rolls, flam accents, paradiddles, paradiddle-diddles, pataflaflas…anywhere a figure has accents and non-accents. This is commonly the worst part of a young player's game; consistent control of the low end heights and sound quality. Get a head start on this now!

*Use the exercise "**Downstrokes**" to help yourself gain mastery of height discrimination between accents and non-accents (Downstrokes and 3" Rebound Strokes). Technically, this is probably the hardest exercise in the book to master. Be critical, and in all things, WORK for relaxation.

Relaxation:

Understand that the goal of a drummer is to play and march from a place of 100% relaxation. Don't be confused by the military approach to the marching art form. What makes things military is uniformity and "stillness." NOT tension. Stillness often takes on the personification of something stone-like and strong. You do not have to feel like stone to look like stone! Don't move! But relax in your stillness.

As you drum, be aware of the tension in your body. Yan or hum sometime when your drumming rolls. Is your face tense? Is your mouth tense? Grinding teeth? Don't! Shrug your shoulders and move your neck a little bit. Are they tense? Breathe and relax them. Are your arms stiff, elbows? Shake them out.

It is hard enough on the body to carry quads, bass, and snare drums. If you add the tension of muscles being flexed when they don't have to be, you create a recipe for twice as much fatigue. And lets face it, more fatigue equals less concentration…less concentration equal poor playing…poor playing equals less fun. So we can conclude that tension equals NO FUN!!

Preparation vs Fun:

While I've got your attention, lets talk philosophy. You guys all love to drum. That is why you are auditioning for the IU Drumline (I hope ☺). My ultimate goal is for every member of the drumline to enjoy what they are doing and to feel a sense of satisfaction after every rehearsal and performance. Even if it kicks their butt, I want each member to leave feeling like they were just part of something that they love.

Here is the formula to achieving that feeling. SHOW UP PREPARED! I know that sounds overly simple, but in my experience it is almost always the truth. Those who show up knowing their stuff and bringing their A game (with a coachable attitude) always enjoy their time spent at Hundred. It is the members who haven't put in the work to learn music, practice a particular technique, or have something memorized that learn to hate practice. Why? Because they spend a 2 hr. rehearsal playing poorly…and NOBODY gets pleasure from drumming poorly.

Preparation can also be applied to equipment issues. If someone didn't change a broken head, or tighten their cymbal straps, or tighten the loose screw on their carrier, or show up in time to tune their drums…that creates an uncomfortable situation that they are stuck with for the entire rehearsal.

Trust me folks, preparation equals fun. Do your homework and you'll enjoy coming to class!

A Note About Funky Doubles:

Funky Doubles is a "double beat" exercise. Most of you are familiar with what that means. (You find that the music requires your strokes to be in combinations of 2 strokes in a row).

I encourage everyone to play this exercise "painfully" slow at first. (75 bpm) Make sure that the second stroke of each group of two has as much rebound as the first. BOTH strokes are rebound strokes, and need to rebound to their top height. If you can master the natural rebound of each second double beat, you will have the tools to play this exercise fluidly at all tempi.

*Please be careful to learn the CORRECT sticking so that your body doesn't memorize mistakes. If there is any doubt, please call me!

A Note About Schmengas:

This exercise is very metrically challenging. If you have any questions, as you learn this, please feel free to call me and ask for clarifications. I will ask the webmaster if she can post a recording of last year's version. (be sure to note the changes on this year's version; it is NOT the same, but similar).

Sectional Technique Information

Playing and Teaching Tenors

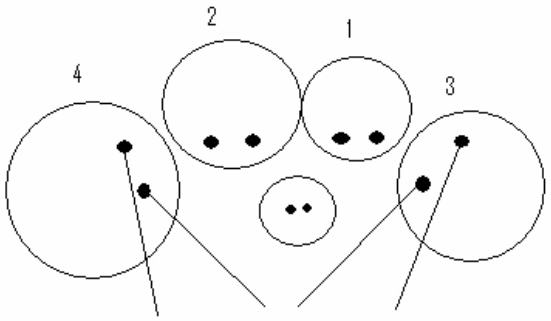
By Joel Brainard

***First of all, your best resources are:**
Book: *Quad Logic* by Bill Bachman
Video: *Reefed Beats* by Bill Bachman

Concepts:

•A tenor player is only as good on multiple drums as they are on one.
•The fundamentals of strong matched grip technique are first priority.
•Stroke Style, Rebound, Stick Control, Rudimental Vocabulary etc..

•The Playing Zones



•Sound Quality
•Playing 2-3 inches from rim. NOT in the center of the head.
•Efficient Motion
•Pivoting from the elbow without pulling the elbow back and forth.
•Independent Motion
•Giving each hand its own little "garage" to return to, so that there is no arguing over the center of each drum head upon return.
•See Eights for practical application

•Approach to motion
•Motion does not change approach to stick control and stroke style!!
•The toughest concept for new quad players is learning how to play the "around" patterns without compromising their approach to rebound (stroke style) .

- **Relaxation, like in anything, is key.**
  - **Be sure that the arms are always relaxed, as if dropped at the sides**
    - **Elbows should NOT be stuck out, far from the body.**

- **Playing Crosses**
  - **Crossing Two Drums (1 to 4, 2 to 3, or 3 to 4)**
    - **Cross Low at the Wrist**
      - **Both hands should move freely, with full stroke ability**

  - **Crossing One Drum (1 to 2, 2 to 4, or 1 to 3)**
    - **Cross Sticks at the "Thumbs"**
      - **This will require explanation****
      - **When crossed at the thumbs your stick underneath has more limited motion then when crossed at the wrist. 9-12" max.**

  - **Approach to Crosses**
    - **The main idea is to maintain your fulcrum height. Once you lift your fulcrum higher then normal, you have less leverage in to the drum head, creating less volume and a different timbre. The object is to avoid playing at a steep angle.**

- **Playing "Sweeps"**
  - **First of all, it is important to realize that if you can't play quality doubles or triples on one drum, you can't do it on 2 or 3 drums.**
    - **This is why it is SO important that students learn to "stroke out" each diddle, as opposed to just letting them drop from an open hand.**

  - **It is important that the player thinks "Vertically", about each stroke striking the head with downward force (not sideways).**

  - **With that said, the stroke DOES have to approach the drum with a slightly angled stroke. *Explanation required***
    - **Only SLIGHT alterations to technique should be accepted.**

- **Curriculum, for Building Your Tenor Players**
  - **Honestly, the most important exercise is eights!**
    - **Simple approach to motion while maintaining stroke style.**

  - **Expand their approach with sixteenth and triplet around patterns next.**
    - **Whether variations or separate exercises.**
      - **Lots of simple variations, to develop comfort.**

  - **When their "chops" are ready on one drum, you'll quickly see their improvement on 5-6 drums.**

Cymbal Techniques

Adam D. Danz

WARNING. Trying to learn how to play cymbals by reading this explanation and trying to learn how to drive a car by reading it's owner's manual are very similar but share one difference: you'll crash successfully with the car.

> Below is a *guide* for learning cymbal techniques. It is supplementary to what you will learn during rehearsals and is not solely sufficient for learning the techniques. Just check it out, hands on learning will be necessary during the audition process. Not required upon arrival.

Orchestral Crash

The Orchestral Crash is usually the most difficult technique to execute consistently yet is also the technique which is most used. Begin in playing position.

- Prep, crash, *RELEASE!* (prep=release)
- Lead with the BOTTOM EDGE of the cymbal from start to finish.
- Keep Right cymbal above the left from start to finish
- Treat the crash like a flam – bottom to top contact
- Manipulate the cymbal with your wrists
- Keep elbows somewhat stationary
- Dynamic control does NOT equal force (this is true of every technique!)
- Do not prep wider than your ears
- ll, A, V, ll, A, V, ll
- 4=prep, 1=crash, 3=playing position
- No Fingers!

Crash Choke

A crash choke begins with an orchestral crash as described above followed by a choke.

* After creating a full crash, immediately apply fingers and thumbs to cymbal pushing the inside bottom edges into your forearms. This dampens 80% of the sound
* Immediately following this primary dampening, *lightly* pull the edges of your cymbals into the area where your shoulder blades meet your pecks. This dampens the rest of the residual ringing.
* At this secondary dampening site, the cyms should form a wide A
* A high pitched ringing means you did not use enough finger. A low pitch means you did use correct secondary dampening. This is called residual ringing.
* 4=prep, 1=crash+choke, 3=playing position.
* Don't make a face when you crash – you know it's come'n!

Open Attach Choke

A staccato sound with a punch.

* Start at playing position
* Does not require prep motion
* Lots of finger contact
* Movement initiated by center, or bell.
* Right slightly above Left
* All edges contact at once
* Continue to apply force until all residual sound is outie.
* 1=VOAC, 3=playing position

Hinge choke

A staccato sound that sounds like a hi hat closing or an attack on a closed hi hat.

* Extend left arm naturally and comfortable down to around your belly button area with palm up as if you are holding a pizza box.
* Place right cym above left with full contact from cym to cym.
* Edge of cyms should be against your gut but not pushing hard into it. (hence 'hinge')
* Right and Left fingers are perpendicular to each other.
* Left hand is stationary, Right does the dirty work.
* Using fingers, gut, uniform, and whatever other contact you can afford, hinge right cym up about 2 inches max and hit it down to the left cym.
* Keep cyms together when finished
* 'and of 4'=prep, 1=hinge choke

Tap

A ringing metallic sound similar to the back end of a stick hitting a ride cym.

* Left hand in playing position (thumb at eye)
* Right cym extended over left cym at 45º angle with a 1.5-2 inch overhang
* Prep is no more than parallel (at most!)
* Left hand does not move at any time
* No fingers
* No release (very slight natural rebound)
* 'and of 4'=prep, 1=tap

Tap Choke

Much like crash choke but more piercing and cutting. Much like a Klank.

- Perform a tap but with *slightly* more power
- Still do not prep more than parallel
- Apply fingers immediately after cym contact
- Left arm pulls naturally in under left arm pit with full body contact
- Rt arm pulls in/maintaining angle to peck-shoulder spot w forearm contact
- Just like the crash choke, dampen first with fingers/forearm, then using body to cut off extras.
- 'and of 4'=prep, 1=tap+choke, 3=playing position
- dynamics does not equal force! Too much force could damage cymbal

Klank

Much like the tap choke but darker and a bit more piercing.

- Bells of cyms a little bit higher than belt/hip level, at sides, against body
- Arms naturally bent
- Left cym edge pointing in towards the inside right cym about 3-4 inches deep from the edge
- Playing position defined as almost touching
- For klank, extend left and right cyms out in front of body while swinging right in slapping motion against the left
- Left cym only moves away from body and does no slapping
- Right prep should not be more than perpendicular to body
- Immediately after contact, place fingers and 'tackle' cym into your body at playing position.
- Dynamics does not equal force! Too much force could damage cymbal.
- 'and of 4'=prep, 1=klank (including choke)

Clunk

Somewhat like klank but dead without ring or pierce.

- Start off in Klank playing position
- Cyms stay at side with full contact throughout entire execution
- Right cym slaps into left cym edge just as in klank except maintaining body contact
- Left cym does not move at any time
- A very small natural rebound will occur.

- ‘and of 4’=prep, 1=Clunk.

Zichen

A zing sound created by edge of right cym scraping against the tonal groves of the left cym.

* Left hand begins in playing position (thumb at eye!)
* Right cym is at 45º angle similar to the tap but placed at the top of the left inner bell with minimal contact.
* Left cym does not move at any time
* Maintaining angle, right cym presses against the tonal groves with *accurate pressure* sliding upward
* Right hand extends fully, past left cym edge, maintaining the same plane.
* 1=Zichen, 3=playing position
* There are many ways to play a zichen, this will be the standard method.

Zich

Similar to the zichen but dampened (Zichen:Klank::Zich:Clunk). Mimics a record scratching.

- Start off with the reverse playing position of the clunk: against body with right pointing into left
- Right cym edge pressed against inside left bell
- Create pressure with left cym
- Scrape right edge along tonal groves of left cym while maintaining full contact with body.
- Right cym has swing motion while left has minimal motion
- Faster motion=higher pitch, slower motion=lower pitch
- 1=zich, and of 1=playing potion.

Cruent / Bell

A similar sound as a tap but more bell like.

* Left hand in front of diaphragm, naturally extended, at 45º angle
* Right cym 90º to left centered above left’s bell. Right also with natural extension.
* Right cym edge makes contact with inner edge of left bell only – not on two points of the bell.
* Prep with a gentle 6” lift of the right hand
* Left cym does not move
* No fingers
* ‘and of 1’=prep, 1=cruent
* allow for natural rebound.

Sizzle

A sound mimicking loose hi hats.

* Begin with left and right cyms in orchestral crash playing position.
* As in the open attach choke, movement is initiated at the bell
* Every individual pair of cyms has a sizzle point – find it, then use muscle memory
* All of the edges contact at the same time, right stays above left.
* Some sizzles are tied to a dampen note, others die naturally and should vibrate as long as possible
* Prep is no more than ear distance
* To dampen: apply fingers and pressure inward.
* 4=prep, 1=sizzle, (end of siz will vary)

Suc

A vacuum like sound.

* Left cym begins in orchestral crash playing position
* Right cym begins with right arm fully extended upward with bottom right edge against top edge of left cym’s bell. Full cym contact.
* Pressure is applied by both hands inward.
* Left cym does not move for duration of technique
* Right is pulled down swiftly while maintaining inward pressure.

* The vacuum should stop the momentum of the right cym and will create the sound.
* 1=suc, 3=playing position.

Slide Choke

A sound mimicking the attack of a loose hi hat followed by closing the hi hat.

* Begin similar to hinge choke position except cym about two inches apart and about fist-width away from you body.
* Left hand remains stationary throughout execution of technique
* Prep: right cym lifted up and back towards your body maintaining parallel planes.
* Attack: Right cym collides with left with a pressure equal to the *sizzle point* while extending right arm to full length straight ahead.
* **Right cym should not contact left cym until fully passing over left cym's rear edge!**
* The back edge of right cym should not go further than front edge of left bell.
* DO NOT move shoulders during execution of technique – control cyms with arms.
* To finish the slide choke, push right cym downward and in to the left cym creating a suc.
* Cyms remain together until next note
* 'and of 4'=prep, 1-attack of slide choke, suc will vary.

Evaluation Crash

- Same as an orchestral crash but has a defined dampening point.
- Only perform first part of release where cyms form an A and hold there.
- When it is time, apply fingers and pull inward like a crash choke.

CYMBAL INFO SHEET

Set Position:
*Straight back
*Shoulders and back=T
*Chin up
*Cymbals at side
*About 1 inch between cymbal and body
*No tension
*Arms straight and relaxed (natural bend)
*Using Fingers to make cymbals perpendicular to the ground

Playing Position:
*Straight back
*Chin up
*Thumbs pointing directly up
*Thumbs at EYE LEVEL
*Right cymbal about 1 to 2 inches above left cymbal (depending on size)
*Cymbals NOSE DISTANCE apart from each other (you should not be able to see through them with both of your eyes but you should be able to blow through them)
*Cymbals should be exactly parallel to each other
*Upper arms should be at a comfortable distance away from the upper body
*Arms should be bent at an approximate 45 angle.

Snares and Basses

**Stay Tuned for later posts on Snare and Bass Technique. For any specific questions, contact the members on the audition letter.