

IMPACT
PERCUSSION



2025 FRONT ENSEMBLE

Welcome to IMPACT Percussion!

On behalf of our administrative, design, and instructional teams, we would like to sincerely thank you for your interest in participating in IMPACT Percussion's 2025 season. Our entire team is looking forward to another remarkable year full of meaningful moments, personal growth and development, and inspiring experiences.

At IMPACT Percussion, our mission is to **empower youth to reach their full potential through achieving excellence in the performing arts**. We carry out our mission by creating an educational environment that fosters performance, positivity, and growth at the highest level.

As part of the 2025 audition process, we will isolate and focus on several musical skill sets to help you better understand our approach and to test your abilities. You may be asked to do an individual audition depending on your standing in the audition process. In order to receive the most out of the audition experience and have the most success, we recommend you have an attitude that stems from **positivity and a growth mindset**. Throughout the season, we will refine our front ensemble technique and mindset, but to help get you started, here are some core concepts that are important to understand from the beginning. We're excited to see you and start our 2025 season!

- *IMPACT Percussion 2025 Front Ensemble Education Team*

Preparing to Play

Before we start playing music, we want to make sure we are mentally and physically ready to achieve success every time. This begins with getting set.

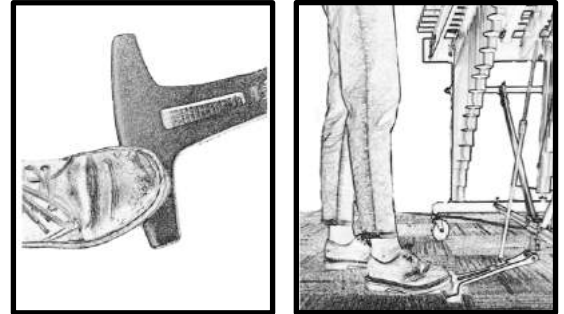
- Set for our Front Ensemble means your mallets or sticks (implements) are in your hands, at your sides, standing with strong posture, and looking into the center.
- Watch the center player and match their movements to bring your implements up to playing position with the rest of the group.
 - Keyboard players: Your mallets should be over the notes you are about to play, about 3/4 the height you are about to play.
 - Drum set / Rack players: Your sticks should be set flat to the drum.
- Before playing, you should breathe, relax, and lift the implements to full height to initiate the first stroke.
- Look toward the center player for timing of the first note, then return your attention to your instrument after that first attack.
- At the end of an exercise or show chunk, return to your initial playing position, and return your attention to the center player.
- The center player will break to bring their implements down, at which time everyone can follow by bringing their implements down.

Body Posture

Feet

Typically, your feet should be shoulder-width apart while playing. You should also distribute your weight so you can comfortably shift side to side, avoiding stepping unless needed for the musical passage. Your body center should always be centered in the area of the instrument you are playing.

*Vibraphone players: Typically, your right foot will remain on your pedal, unless there is an extended period where the pedal is not being utilized. In this case, you should match your posture with the marimbas. **The heel of your right foot should remain on the ground, acting as a pivot point.** The left foot remains staggered behind the right foot, with weight evenly distributed. When moving to the upper or lower range of the instrument, additional weight may be placed on the right heel. In general, about 2 – 3 inches of your right foot will make contact with the pedal.



Knees

While playing, keep your knees relaxed, not locked. You will need to be able to move around your instrument quickly and maintain comfort while standing for extended periods.

Hips

In general, your hips should remain parallel to your instrument, except when playing mixed manual 4-mallet passages (for keyboard players).

Upper Body

Your upper body position will change with pulsing, breathing, and performance. The default position will be standing up straight, with relaxed shoulders, square to your instrument.

Head

Your head position will change with pulsing, breathing, and performance. In general, you should hold your chin high, switching where you look between the center player and your own instrument. Be mindful of your facial expressions, and that you aren't holding extra tension in your facial muscles.

Shoulders/Arms/Wrists

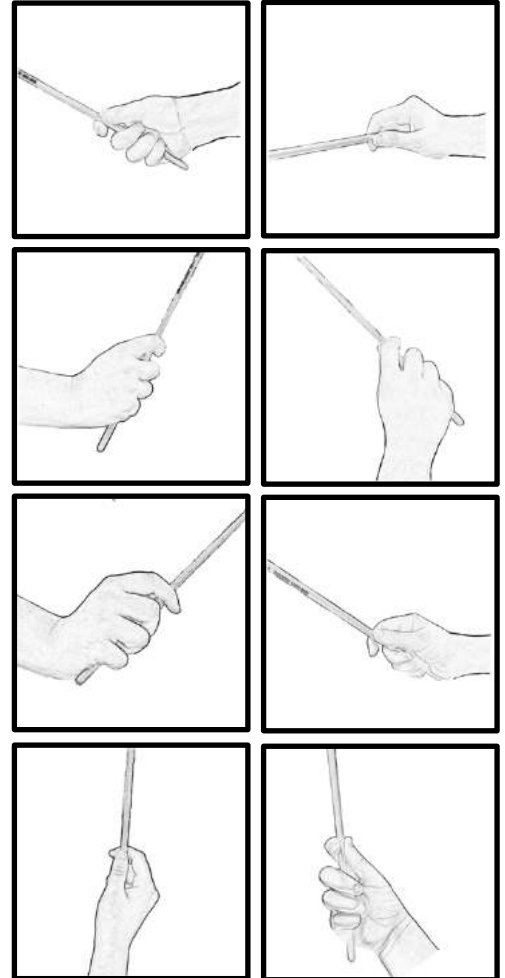
Your shoulders, arms, and wrists should be as relaxed as possible while playing. Your forearms should slope down slightly toward your instrument, with your hands and wrists just high enough to avoid hitting the keys or drums. Your instrument height should accommodate where this point naturally is for each player. Your wrists should stay low to the keys or drums while playing, except when floating. Wrists should follow the natural arc of the arm.

Mallet & Stick Grip

Two-Mallet Grip

At IMPACT Percussion, we use American Grip for two-mallet work. Your thumbs should not face the ceiling, and the back of your hand should not be flat to the ground like we see in French and German grips. To achieve this grip:

- Start with your hands in German grip, then lower the outsides of your hands down, and the thumbs slightly up. *Think of the first knuckle at the base of the pointer finger as the highest point of the hand.*
- Your pointer finger should extend outward, with the tip of the finger curved inward. The mallet will rest on the knuckle closest to your fingernail, with the thumb gently placed on top making a “t” shape.
- When playing, you will need to shift between using your front and back fulcrum based on the demands of the music. Front fulcrum meaning you feel the most contact with the mallet in your first three fingers. Back fulcrum meaning you feel it in the back three fingers. The back fulcrum is used for slower passages that require more sound, while the front fulcrum is used for lighter, faster passages.
- In general, your back fingers should not come off the mallet, and there should be around 1.5 - 2.5 inches of mallet coming out past the back of the hand.

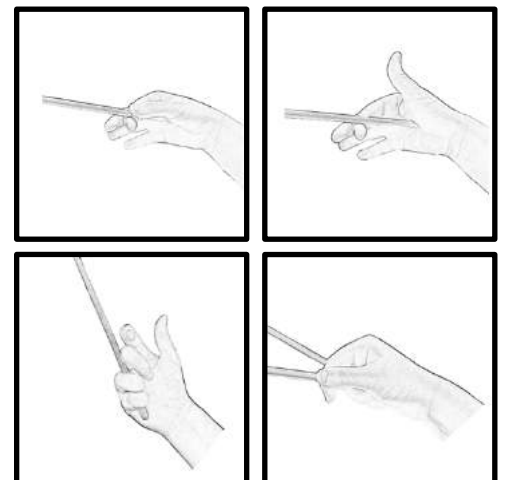


Four-Mallet Grip

For four-mallet work, IMPACT Percussion uses Stevens Grip.

Outside Mallets - 1 & 4

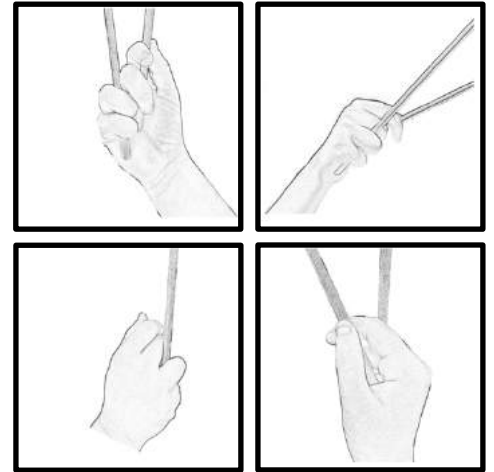
Hold the mallets with your ring and pinky fingers. The mallet will rest in between your middle and ring fingers, sitting underneath the middle knuckle. There should be about half an inch of mallet coming out of the back, and there should not be any opening or closing of the back fingers while playing.



Inside Mallets - 2 & 3

Place the end of the mallet in the fleshy part of your hand (under the thumb and towards the center palm). Your mallet will rest on

your pointer finger, inside the knuckle closest to the fingernail. Rest your thumb gently on top of the mallet, across from the knuckle on the pointer finger, making a “t” just like in a two-mallet grip. The pointer finger should sit at a curve, but not be pulled in too far towards the palm.



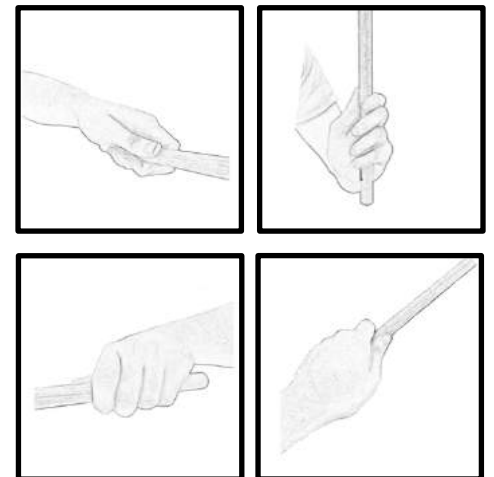
Interval Changes

Interval Changes are achieved by rolling the mallet between your pointer finger and thumb. Rolling the mallet outwards will create a larger interval, while rolling the mallet inwards will create a smaller interval. The end of the mallet will follow the curve of your hand to achieve both extreme ends (2nd or 8+). Players generally aim to hold a 4th to a 5th while playing with the inner mallets, otherwise, the interval should be set according to the notes being played. The position of the outer mallet does not change while adjusting the interval size.

Stick Grip (for Rack and Drum Set)

Similar to the two-mallet grip, we use American Grip for general playing. Your thumbs should not face the ceiling, and the palm of your hand should not be flat to the ground like seen in French and German grips. To achieve this grip:

- Start with your hands in German grip, then lower the outsides of the hands down, and the thumbs slightly up. Think of the first knuckle at the base of your pointer finger as the highest point of your hand.
- The fulcrum (the point of contact on your hand where the drumstick pivots when you play) should be created between the thumb and index finger. It isn't a rigid point where the stick is completely fixed. The fulcrum allows the stick to slightly rotate as you move your wrist and fingers while playing. This rotation helps you generate power and it helps you control different aspects of your stroke, like the bounce of the stick off the drumhead.
- After setting the fulcrum, wrap your remaining three fingers (middle, ring, and pinky) comfortably around the stick. The goal is to keep all fingers relaxed. Contact the stick, without applying pressure.

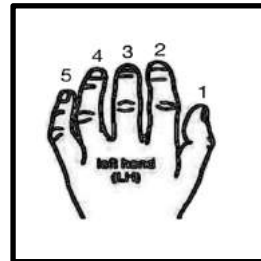
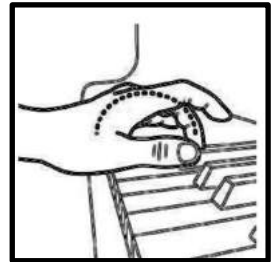


Synth Hand and Wrist Positions

Just like our approach to mallet and stick grip, we want the approach to synth playing to be relaxed and efficient.

- Fingers should be naturally curved, not flat, as if holding a light ball.

- Avoid tensing your wrists. They should be kept relatively flat and move naturally with your fingers.
- Keep your thumbs curved and positioned comfortably under your fingers, not sticking out.
- Each finger should move independently, striking the keys with the pads at the fingertips.
- For staccato (short, detached notes), use a quick, tapping motion from the finger joints. For legato (smooth, connected notes), focus on a rolling motion from the wrist and arm.
- Avoid tensing your arms. Engage your larger arm and shoulder muscles to generate power for louder passages, but keep them relaxed for softer playing.
- Focus on using efficient arm and wrist movements for larger intervals instead of relying solely on finger stretches.
- Fingers are number 1 – 5, with 1 being the thumb.



General Stroke Types (for all players)

Full Stroke: A full stroke starts with the implement in a raised position. The implement travels down to strike the bar or drum, then returns back to its starting point.

Down Stroke: A down stroke starts with the implement in a raised position. The implement travels down to strike the bar or drum, and remains in a lowered position instead of returning back to the starting point.

Tap Stroke: A tap stroke starts with the implement in a lowered position. The implement travels down to strike the bar or drum, then returns to the lowered position.

Up Stroke: An up stroke starts with the implement in a lowered position. The implement travels down to strike the bar or drum, then goes back up to a raised position.

Four-Mallet Strokes

Double Vertical Strokes: The mallets should move in a straight “plane”. Think about an invisible string running through the mallet heads. The mallets move down to the keys and return to their starting point simultaneously.

Independent Strokes: Each mallet should be able to move independently. For this stroke, the mallets should all start in a straight plane. Then, the mallet in use will rotate down to strike the bar, and return back to the other mallets.

Alternating Strokes: This is a combination of independent strokes, alternating in different patterns between inner and outer mallets. The mallets will rotate down to the bar, then return to their starting position.

Lateral Strokes: Lateral strokes are the movement of mallets in sequential order (1234, 4321, 2134, etc.). Laterals are played by initiating a single motion in the wrist, and then rolling through the other mallets.

Inner Mallet Strokes: This is the exclusive use of mallets 2 and 3. Mallets 2 and 3 will start in a raised position, rotate down to the board, and then return to their starting point. The outer mallets will drop down to half height, where they will sit relaxed while the inner mallets are engaged. *The lower the dynamic, the less height difference there will be between the outer and inner mallets.*

Our Approach

For general playing, and unless otherwise noted, our default approach will be to play with a Full Stroke. Strive to produce a full and warm sound out of your instrument right from the start. To begin to achieve this, your implements should feel heavy and relaxed in your hands. *Before your first attack, breathe in, and release any tension in your grip. This may result in a slight lift of your implements.*

The wrist-to-arm ratio of our stroke will vary based on the demands of the music. In general, you should use about 80% wrist and about 20% arm for each stroke at a full dynamic. *The lower the dynamic, the more wrist motion is utilized.*

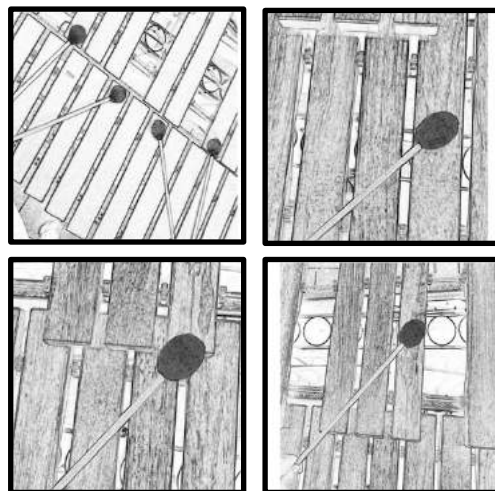
In general, your approach should be consistent throughout different dynamics, and you should strive to play through the keyboard bars or drum head. This will help you achieve a full sound, even at lower dynamics. In general, and unless otherwise noted, you should aim to use about 80% of your playing energy when striking your instrument. This will vary at times based on the demands of each musical passage. *You should also strive to use a consistent speed throughout the down and up motions of each stroke.*

Playing Zones

A relaxed and efficient technique paired with striking your instrument in the proper zones will help you create the best sound possible.

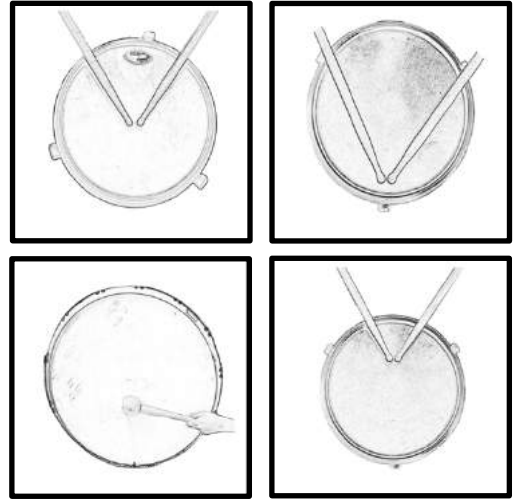
Keyboard Zones

Throughout the keyboard bars are strings passing through the bars to hold them up in playing position. The area where the string passes through the bar is referred to as a **node**. The closer to the node you play, the less the bar vibrates, and the deader the sound produced. In general, you should strive to strike the key in the center of the bar, not on the node. In some cases, you will also utilize playing on the edge of the bars. Staff will specifically designate when the edges should be played on. Playing on the center of the key is the default.



Drum Zones

In general, when playing on a concert snare drum, you should strike the center of the head. For softer playing, you can move the beads of the sticks closer to the edge of the drum, while still playing on top of the snares (which are underneath the drum). For tom drums, you should play roughly 2 - 3 inches toward center from the rim of the drum. The center may be used at times to create a “punchy” sound. For concert bass drum and gong, the playing zone will be 3 - 4 inches below the center of the gong. The center of the bass drum may also be used at times to create a “punchy” sound.



Bass Guitar

Fretting Hand

- **Finger placement:** Position your fingers directly over the frets, not behind them. Use the pads of your fingertips for optimal control and sound clarity.
- **Curved fingers:** Maintain a natural curve in your fingers, as if holding a light ball. Avoid pressing your fingers flat on the fretboard.
- **Finger independence:** Each finger should move independently, pressing down on the strings with firm but relaxed pressure.
- **Left-hand position:** Keep your wrist straight and relaxed. Let your arm hang naturally from your shoulder.

Picking Hand

- **Pick grip:** Hold the pick between your thumb and index finger, with the pick resting comfortably against the fleshy part of your thumb. Experiment with different pick angles to find what feels comfortable and produces your desired sound.
- **Picking location:** Rest your picking hand on the body of the bass near the bridge pickup for a brighter attack or near the neck pickup for a warmer tone.
- **Picking motion:** Use a relaxed wrist movement to pick the strings.

Technique

- **Muting technique:** Use your fretting hand to lightly rest on the strings above the fret you're pressing. This helps dampen unwanted string noise and creates a cleaner sound.
- **Fingerpicking:** This involves using individual fingers (index, middle, and sometimes ring finger) to pluck the strings instead of a pick. This offers more control over dynamics and articulation.
- **Slapping and Popping:** A percussive technique using the thumb to "slap" the E string and pull off (pop) with other fingers, creating a distinct, funky sound.
- **Palm Muting:** Rest the heel of your palm lightly on the bridge while picking. This dampens string noise and creates a muted, percussive tone.

- **Ghost Notes:** Play very light, percussive notes with your picking hand that don't fully sound the strings. Creates rhythmic texture and movement.
- **Hammer-Ons and Pull-Offs:** Hammer-ons involve hammering a finger onto a fret to produce a note without picking. Pull-offs involve pulling a finger off a fret to produce a lower note without picking. These techniques allow for smooth note transitions.
- **Slides:** Slide your finger along a string between frets to create a smooth pitch bend

Final Thoughts

Each member of IMPACT Percussion has an individual responsibility that aids in the success of the ensemble. That responsibility covers not only the music we play, but the visual artistry to tell the story of our show. Throughout the season, members will be tasked with bringing our music to life, and creating a memorable connection with the audience. During auditions, you may be asked to step outside your comfort zone. We encourage you to try new things, be flexible, and soak up as much information as you can, and don't forget to enjoy the experience!

Additional Resources

Practice Tracks



Books

- *Syncopation* by Ted Reed
- *Method of Movement* by Leigh Howard Stevens
- *Instruction Course for Xylophone* by George Hamilton Green

Additional Media

- Tonal Energy App (metronome, tuner, tempo tracks)
- The Amazing Slow Downer App (for practice tracks)
- pas.org/resources
- musictheory.net

Singles

IMPACT Percussion 2025

The musical score is written for three parts: Mlts. (Melody), Bass, and Perc. (Percussion). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures 1 through 9. Measures 1-4 are marked with '1', '2', '3', and '4' respectively. Measures 5-6 are marked with '5' and '6'. Measures 7-9 are marked with '7', '8', and '9'. The Perc. part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The Mlts. and Bass parts feature eighth-note runs. In measure 9, there is a 'Shift (to next scale)' instruction, a crossed-out note, and a 'preps' (preparation) mark. The Perc. part has a 'L' (Left) mark in measure 9.

Chromatic Octaves

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1 2 3 4

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

5 6 7 8 9

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

10 11 12 13 14

R R R R L L L L

15 16 17 18

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

19 20 21

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

22 23 24 25

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

Chromatic Attack

IMPACT Percussion 2025

1 2 C 3

4 Db 5 D 6 D

7 8 9 10

11 12 C 13 B

Cont. Chromatically to C

The score is divided into four systems. Each system contains a piano part with a treble and bass clef, and a drum part with a snare drum clef. The piano part features chromatic ascending and descending lines in the right hand, while the bass hand provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The drum part consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, often in a steady pulse. The key signature changes from C major to D minor (Db) and back to C major. The time signature varies between 3/4 and 4/4. Percussion notation includes 'R' for right hand and 'L' for left hand.

14 B 15 16 Bb

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

17 18 19 20 Cont. Chromatically to C

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

21 22 23

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

Green

IMPACT Percussion 2025

OG Green

1 2

3 4 5 **Shift** (to next scale)
preps

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

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

D.T. Green

1 2 3

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

4 5

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

6 7 8

Shift (to next scale)

preps

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

Vertical Strokes

IMPACT Percussion 2025

$\text{♩} = 60+$
*Version A recommended for marimbas; B for vibraphones

Version A
Version B
4-string Bass Guitar
Percussion

6 ... Ascend Chromatically to C

Mar. 1
Vib. 1
Bass
Perc.

C B Bb A ... Descend Chromatically to C

f p f p

Sket

IMPACT Percussion 2025

1 2 3

Ab Bb C

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

4 5 6

Bb Eb F

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

7 8 9

G Ab

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

Alternating Strokes

IMPACT Percussion 2025

A ♩ = 100 - 130+

Keyboards

Piano

Bass Guitar

4

8

12 **B**

16

Slide

mf ————— *ff*

20

24

28

D.V.I.S.

IMPACT Percussion 2025

1 2 3 4

Right Hand first,
Left hand after repeat

5 6 7

8 9 10

Switch Hands

The musical score is divided into three systems. Each system contains a piano part (treble and bass clefs) and a drum part (snare drum). The piano part consists of eighth-note chords in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The drum part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The first system (measures 1-4) includes a tempo change to 3/4 time at measure 3. The second system (measures 5-7) includes a tempo change to 3/4 time at measure 6. The third system (measures 8-10) includes a tempo change to 4/4 time at measure 9 and a 'Switch Hands' instruction at measure 10, indicated by an 'X' over the drum staff.

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

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

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

Lateral Rolls

IMPACT Percussion 2025

1 2 3

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The score is in 4/4 time. Measure 1 features a steady eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. Measure 2 features a dotted eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. Measure 3 features a steady eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. The bass clef and percussion clef parts provide accompaniment. Percussion notation includes 'R' for right and 'L' for left.

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

4 5

Musical notation for measures 4-5. Measure 4 features a dotted eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. Measure 5 features a steady eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. The bass clef and percussion clef parts provide accompaniment. Percussion notation includes 'L' for left and 'R L R R L R L L' for right and left.

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

6

Musical notation for measure 6. The treble clef part features a steady eighth-note pattern. The bass clef and percussion clef parts provide accompaniment. Percussion notation includes 'L' for left and 'R L R R L R L L' for right and left.

R L R R L R L L

7

Musical notation for measure 7. The treble clef part features a steady eighth-note pattern. The bass clef and percussion clef parts provide accompaniment. Percussion notation includes 'R R L L' for right and left.

R R L L

8 9

3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R L R L

10 11

3 3 3 3

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

12

3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R L R L

13 14

6 6 6 6

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

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

15

6 6

3 3 3 3

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

16

6 6

3 3 3 3

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

17 18 19

z z