

# 7<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT

*Drum & Bugle Corps*



Front Ensemble Program

2025 Edition

## Introduction

Welcome to the 2025 7th Regiment Front Ensemble. In this packet, you'll find the audition warmups and technical exercises that we use here. The accompanying material aims to provide guidance for how to approach learning that music as well as insight into our playing philosophy.

Every director, caption head, and percussion instructor will have their own approach to playing. Each method has its own merits, and each is just as valid as the next. Even within our percussion staff here, you'll find slight variations in how each instructor approaches different topics, but we all work from the fundamental principles outlined here. What's in this packet isn't meant to contradict whatever you've learned before. Rather, I hope it gives you a new, enriched perspective on your drumming.

Set attainable goals every time you step behind an instrument. Focus on a singular page, section, or even measure. Work carefully through each concept so that your listening ability can develop along with your technical facility. Honing your listening skills so you can hear and evaluate your sound critically is equally important as developing your chops and dexterity! If you have the chance, it will also help to work through these exercises with a teacher or a fellow drummer!



Whether you're an experienced performer or a newcomer, we hope you'll find the info here welcoming and encouraging for your practice. Be patient and persistent, and practice on!

Henry Lin  
Front Ensemble Manager  
7<sup>th</sup> Regiment

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment Philosophy



As an organization we perhaps approach the drum corps activity a little differently from other organizations. At 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment you will often here the term “Rise As One.” Our goal is that through your experience here you forge meaningful and lasting relationships. This includes with the members you march with, the volunteers and staff you interact with, our housing site hosts, the fans you entertain, and everyone else that comes together to make this group work.

As a 14-time DCI Open class finalist and a 6-time Drumline battle champion, we also strive for excellence and professionalism in everything that we do. This necessitates a level of handwork and perseverance that may be higher than any other activity that you have participated in. When *everyone* gives their full effort what seemed like mountains can suddenly become hills. We want you to learn about life on a team that supports one another no matter the situation. In other words, a family.

## Audition Information

Keyboard, mallets, percussion instruments, and electronics will be provided. The following items are required:

- Three-ring binder with all packet information and materials printed.
- All music and packet materials in individual plastic sheet protectors.
- Drum pad and a pair of sticks.
- Pencils.
- Metronome – you do not need to purchase one but if you have one it will help.
- **\*\*\*Ear plugs – These will be required for all rehearsals both outdoor and indoor. Hearing loss is a serious and widespread issue in this activity. Please protect your hearing.\*\*\***



- Music stands – It is highly recommended you bring one as stands will not be provided. This is not required.

Please assign yourself to a position of interest. If you are coming out to audition for a mallet spot, learn keyboard parts. If you are coming out to play synth, please learn the synth parts. Etc. Please take the time to review the packet and apply the technique stated below. If you have any questions on what to learn, please contact us and we will give you an assignment if you are unsure what to play. Additional exercises may be added as the winter camp season goes on to better match the needs of the show music and the ensemble, so please be prepared to learn and memorize these new exercises.

### **Audition Process**

We want everyone to come to camp and experience weekends/days feeling comfortable and to walk out with as much information as we can teach you. Each of these events qualifies as an unofficial “audition.” After the first time, we will guide you towards an appropriate target area in your practice. It is wise to consider dedicating practice time to any skills mentioned during camps as progress will be tracked and is typically considered to be indicative of potential rate of growth. Eventually, we will lock down spots after an individual audition.

### **Individual Audition**

All packet material and exercises must be learned and can be requested for all instruments in the individual auditions. This means you can and will be asked to play the packet exercises in your individual auditions. You should also prepare a short solo (~1 min) that demonstrates your playing ability. We will also take this time to get to know more about each other as well as answer any questions you may have.



## Group Audition

All exercises, the corps song, and the audition excerpt must be learned and can be requested for all instruments in the group auditions. You will be evaluated on your ability to play in a group setting with a focus on ensemble cohesion. You will also be evaluated on your ability to function as a member of a team both *inside and outside* (moving, unloading, loading, etc.) of rehearsal.

## Video Assignments

Video assignments are used to make sure any new changes in music are learned as well as to make sure concepts and fundamentals are being kept up between camps. Video quality doesn't need to be perfect as long as we can hear you and see your hands. These videos will be reviewed by the staff, and we will follow up with feedback to help you grow and better prepare for camp weekends. Failure to complete these assignments will be a determining factor towards the decisions in our contract process.

## Preparation Expectations

Perhaps the hardest part of succeeding is for ALL members to achieve the music at their highest possible level. To better prepare for this, here are 7 key elements that should be kept in mind when practicing, and that will consequently be expected throughout the season.

- Technical Proficiency - efficiency, control, and appropriate range of motion.
- Expressivity - musicality, both perceived and innate.



- Chops - physical brute strength and endurance.
- Pulse Control and Rhythm - accuracy and cohesion with others.
- Memorization - everything on the page including accents and rehearsal marks.
- Performance Quality - “be” the music, naturally and convincingly.
- Preparation - nothing is overlooked. Nothing.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to email any of the front ensemble staff at the email addresses at the end of the packet. We look forward to seeing you at auditions!

Throughout the rest of the packet are various videos to accompany the explanations on technique. Each video will be linked in a highlighted box such as [this](#) (Video #1). You can also access each video from the Front Ensemble Google Drive or access the playlist on YouTube [here](#). There are nine videos in total.



## Technique Basics

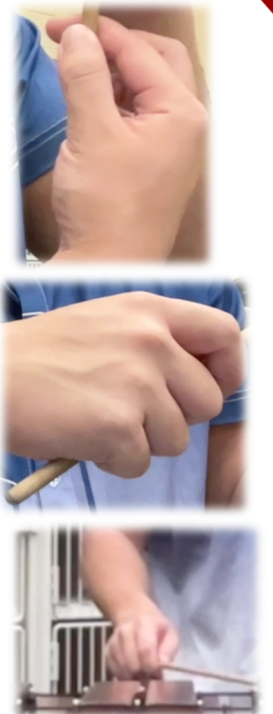
### Body Alignment (Video #2)

- Feet are shoulder length apart. It should feel like they are pulling into the ground. Knees are still able to be bent, but the bottom half of the body feels stable.
- Knees should be relaxed. Do not lock them – they need to be able to be bent
- Shoulders are relaxed
- The spine is straight and not overextended.
- While the arms are hanging, pivot from the elbow joint to bring the mallets up to the keyboard

### 2-Mallets (Video #3)

#### Grip Guidelines

- A fulcrum should be formed between the first knuckle of the index finger and pad of the thumb
- Wrap your back fingers around the stick naturally.
- Leave about 1/4 inch of the mallet showing at the end of the hand
- When the stick/mallet is on the instrument, the back of the hand should be parallel to the ceiling. From this position the wrist pivots upward to raise the mallet. The back of the hand should slowly starting forming a 45 degree angle to the ceiling



#### Stroke Guidelines

- The path of the stroke is straight up and down.
- The speed of the stroke going down and coming up are the same.
- The wrist is employed in every stroke, even if the fingers and arm are involved.
- Using wrist creates a passive forearm reaction, aka “wrist pop”: as the sticks/mallets move down, the wrist moves up; in fast motion this appears as if the wrist is “popping”.
- Movement around the instruments:

- a. The wrist is responsible for vertical motion.
- b. The arm is responsible for horizontal motion (across the keyboard) and lateral (to the accidentals) motion.

## 4-Mallets

### Stevens Grip Guidelines (Video #4)

- *Inside Mallets*

- The middle finger should support the bottom tip of the mallet to the meaty part of the hand for most small intervals (2nds and 3rds) and form a cantilever by pointing out across the body and supporting the mallet for larger intervals (4ths and larger).
- The thumb rests on top of the mallet shaft, forming a fulcrum with the index finger just like when holding only one mallet.
- When done correctly this entire system should be stable without needing to put any extra pressure or tension in the hand.



- *Outside mallets*

- The outside mallet is placed between the middle and ring finger, resting between the “webbing” and the last knuckle. The shaft should extend only about 1/2” from your hand.
- The pinky and ring fingers should wrap around the mallet firmly. Unlike with the inside mallets, this system requires you to grip the outer mallet.
- The thumbnail should be parallel to the ceiling. (Video #5)
- Index fingers should point towards each other (right hand pointing west/left hand pointing east) when playing intervals of a 4th, 5th, or 6th. This is the general playing position.
- The bottom of the hands should never sit below the plane of the natural notes.
- The octave grip may be employed for notes of an octave or greater. This is achieved by moving the bottom of the inside mallet from the center of



the palm of your hand (which is the position used for all intervals up to a 7th) towards the “webbing” between the middle and ring finger.

- The 4 mallet numbering system is: LH- outside 1, inside 2; RH- inside 3, out- side 4; so, 1-2-3-4.

### The Three Elbow Positions (Video #6)

- Square to the body: This position occurs when both mallets in your hand are both on natural notes, or both on accidentals. Your elbow should be naturally in line with your shoulders, about two to three inches from touching your rib cage.
- Elbows out: This position occurs when your outside mallet is on an accidental and your inside mallet is on a natural. Your elbow should be extended out away from your body. Your wrist should remain straight, in line with your arm.
- Elbows in: This position occurs when your inside mallet is on an accidental and your outside mallet is on a natural. Your elbow should be touching your rib cage. Your wrist may need to be bent slightly inward.



### Stroke Guidelines (Video #7) & Push vs. Rotation (Video #8)

- Double Verticals: Both mallets together. This should be performed with a relaxed “wrist pop”.
- Single Independent: One mallet alone. The mallet NOT hitting the keyboard should be rotating in a tight, circular motion to allow the mallet that IS hitting the keyboard to travel to and from the bar. The active mallet should appear to rotate AROUND the other mallet.
- Single Alternating: When one mallet is followed by the other mallet in the same hand at a faster tempo. Each mallet should rebound back to the starting position, similar to dribbling two basketballs, one in each hand. This stroke should NOT resemble a “see-saw” motion.
- Double Lateral: Used as an alternative to rolling chords hand-to-hand, this stroke is a combination of a vertical motion and a rotary motion. The stroke begins with a vertical descent from the mallet performing the first

note, and is followed immediately by a rotation towards the mallet performing the second note. The combination of these two movements results in a swift and efficient stroke, causing TWO notes to sound from ONE fluid motion.

## ***Non-Mallet Instruments***

There is a larger allowance for variance in approach for the rest of the instruments in the front ensemble. As you are often the only player in the entire corps on your specific instrument, uniformity is less of a concern. Therefore technique can, at times, be at the discretion of the player but should still follow the same general principles of fluidity and control as described in the previous two sections. Players must still be able to adapt to changes in technique as necessitated by the staff. Below are some considerations and challenges unique to these instruments in a front ensemble context. Please take the following into account when preparing for your audition.

### **Drum Set**

Playing drum set in a front ensemble is fundamentally unique from playing drum set in a setting such as a rock band or a jazz ensemble. Whereas the drum set player in those settings is unilaterally responsible for tempo maintenance, the drum set player in a front ensemble functions as the connection between backfield and the pit. The drum set player must have a well-trained ear that is able to detect changes in tempo backfield and adjust their own playing accordingly so that the rest of the front ensemble stays “in time” with the rest of the corps.

### **Synthesizer**

The synthesizer often doubles the brass book in addition to playing melodic passages in the mallet section. They are also responsible for triggering sound effects and voice narrations. The synthesizer part is often mistaken as simplistic. However, time after time has shown even basic books to be challenging for even the most proficient musicians due to two main factors.

One, the synth player must have impeccable rhythmic accuracy. This proves to be challenging for long time piano players who often play solo repertoire where there is more leeway for tempo and rhythm. This issue becomes

magnified when utilizing vocal samples as the human ear is attuned to “hiccups” in a sung part. Two, the synth player must have finger dexterity and coordination in order to play the book, this often proves challenging for drummers wishing to play synth for the first time. Depending on their musical background, the synthesizer player should focus on honing either one or both of these skills.

### **Rack**

The rack serves as the ornamentation of the corps. If the drum corps is an ice cream sundae, the rack is the cherry on top adding dimension and character to the sound. In addition to being adept at drums and mallet percussion, rack players should be comfortable with a wide variety of auxiliary percussion in addition to extended techniques and be comfortable utilizing multiple techniques simultaneously. They must also have a keen awareness of how nuances in touch and approach to an instrument affects its sound and timbre. Using this knowledge, they must adjust their playing style in order to best support the needs of the ensemble as these nuances are typically left to their own discretion of the player by the arranger and not written explicitly in the music. Players should also be comfortable moving around in a multi-percussion setup and be able to choreograph fast implement changes.

### **Bass Guitar**

Serving as a bass sound enhancer, the bass guitar is also the second half of the rhythm section. The bassist, following the lead of the drum set player, helps the rest of the front ensemble lock into what is occurring backfield by giving harmonic and melodic cues for the front ensemble to listen to. At times, the bassist may be given the responsibility of triggering other electronic samples. The bassist should also be comfortable with performing the music. As the most physically exposed player in the front ensemble, the bassist must exude confidence and emotion from head to toe in their character performance and bring the music to life.

### **Timpani**

The timpanist serves as both a bass sound enhancer and a virtuosic instrument within the ensemble. A great timpanist can make a corps sound 3x as large. The most important tool in a drum corps timpanists arsenal is their ear. With the amount of moving and fluctuations in temperature in a typical

drum corps rehearsal day, tuning and retuning inevitably become constant struggles for the timpanist. The timpanist should be comfortable with identify and producing all intervals with precision accuracy without the use of gauges. This requires not only extensive ear training, but also foot dexterity.

## Practice Tips (Video #9)

- Focus on what you are not yet successful at.
- Practice **actively** rather than passively. Mindlessly hacking away at notes will yield slow and inconsistent results. Instead, seek out the answers and critique yourself after every single repetition. The general order of thinking should be as follows
  - *What sound do I want (ask this question before the repetition)?*  
*Did I achieve the sound that I wanted?*  
*If no, what was lacking?*  
*How can I achieve that sound through my instrument?*  
*What do I variables do I have to change about my hands, feet, body, etc. to achieve what I want?*
- Here is an effective practice routine:
  - ❑ Make a plan before playing of what you want to accomplish. Set long term goals and keep track of your progress. Working on short fragments of music at a deeper level will prove more effective than working on everything in a shallow manner.
  - ❑ Have your music, a pencil, and a metronome with you in your session.
  - ❑ Break down your selection until you get to a tempo that you can be successful with, and practice it with an emphasis on good technique, musicianship, and the preparation expectations at the beginning of this handbook. This is where you analyze and ask questions
  - ❑ Slowly increase the tempo until you are above tempo, and then bring it back down to the actual tempo, stabilizing comfort.

- ❑ Each session, repeat this process with a few musical selections that you struggle with.
  
- ❑ Film yourself throughout each practice session. Not only is this a great way to track progress, but it allows you to analyze and critique your own technique and make changes when necessary.

## Closing

The drum corps season has many stages: learning good technique, learning music, camps, spring training, cleaning the show, performing the show, etc.

As a staff, we are here for all of you if you ever need help with anything. Please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to seeing your growth through the season!

Sincerely,

7<sup>th</sup> Regiment Front Ensemble Staff

## Exercises/Audition Excerpt

The following pages contain scores for the exercises and the audition excerpt. Everything below in addition audio tracks, individual parts for the audition excerpt, and technique videos can be found in the audition packet Google Drive [here](#).

# Essential Drumming Skills for Front Ensemble

Ex. 1- Singles/8s

mf  
R R ... L L ... R

Ex. 2- Doubles

mf  
R R R R ... L L L L ... R

Ex. 3- Triples

mf  
R R R ... L L L ... R

Ex. 8- Accent/Tap

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

Ex. 9- Roving 16ths

f/p  
R L R L ... R R R R ... L L L L

Duple Check Patterns

f  
R L R L ... L R L ... R R L ... R L L ... R L R ...  
play this first cell (the "check") in between every other cell

1 2 3 4  
5 6 7 8 9  
10 11 12 13 14

Triple Check Patterns

f  
R L R L R L R L R L R L ... L R R L ... R L L R ...  
play this first cell (the "check") in between every other cell

3 4 5 6



# Boogie

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*♩* = 120

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Mallets

Drumset

Rack

Timpani

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Synth

Snare Drum

11 12 13 14 15

Sus. Cym

*f*

*ad lib.*

*f*

*mf*

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-9-7-10-8-7-10-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-10-7-8-10-7-9-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-9-7-10-8-7-10-8

# Green Scales

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G. H. Green/Henry Lin

*♩ = 120*

2 3 4 5 6 7 Repeat in all keys and modes

Mallets *f*

Drumset *f* *ad lib.*

Rack *f* *ad lib.*

Timpani *f*

Electric Guitar *f*

Bass Guitar *f*

Synth

Optional Right Hand Part

1 3 5 1 3 5 1 3 5 1 3 5

# SRT

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Tsalakis

**Mallets**  
J = 80-100

**Drumset/Rack**

**Electric Guitar**  
Palm Muted  
Am7

**Timpani/Bass Guitar**

**Piano**

**Mal.**

**D. Set/Rack**

**El. Guit.**

**Timp/ B. Guitar**

**Pno.**

# Tuxedo

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Henry Lin

Marimba/Xylophone

Vibraphone

Drumset

Rack

Timpani

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Synth

$\text{♩} = 68$

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

*f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

ad lib. ad lib. Tambourine Mark Tree

Gadd9 Gmaj7 Gadd9 Gmaj7 Cmadd9 C5add57 Cmadd9 Cm7

Gadd9 Gmaj7 Gadd9 Gmaj7 Cmadd9 C5add57 Cmadd9 Cm7

Gadd9 Gmaj7 Gadd9 Gmaj7 Cmadd9 C5add57 Cmadd9 Cm7

Mrm./Xyl.

Vib.

D. Set

Sle. Be.

Timp.

El. Guit.

B. Guit.

Syn.

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

*f* *ff* *ff* *f* *ff* *ff* *f* *ff*

Sleigh Bells Sus. Cym

Gaus2 G Cm7 Ebmaj7 D D7 Bb+/D D Gmin(maj7)/D D Dadd9 D

Gaus2 G Cm7 Ebmaj7 D D7 Bb+/D D Gmin(maj7)/D D Dadd9 D

Gaus2 G Cm7 Ebmaj7 D D7 Bb+/D D Gmin(maj7)/D D Dadd9 D

22 19 17 20 15 18 15 14 17 14 13 16 15 11 15 14 10 13 11 8 11 10

Audition Excerpt: Start at letter T and stop and letter U

Musical score for percussion and strings, measures 45-50. The score includes parts for Xyl., Mar., Vib., E. Gtr., Bass, Dr., Perc., Timp., and Synth. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The score is marked with a 'T' at the beginning of measure 47, indicating the start of the audition excerpt. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *ff*, and *f*. The percussion parts include a variety of instruments: Xyl., Mar., Vib., Dr., Perc., and Timp. The string parts (E. Gtr. and Bass) are marked with 'soloistic' and 'f' dynamics. The score includes several annotations: 'bells' above the Xyl. part in measure 47; 'soft pit interlude battery backfield?' above the Vib. parts in measures 47-50; 'soloistic' above the E. Gtr. part in measure 47; 'gong scrape shaker' above the Perc. part in measure 47; and 'wire brushes on bass drum(stirred)' above the Perc. part in measure 47. The score also includes fingerings and articulation marks throughout.

51 52 53 54 55 56

Xyl.

Mar. *p* *mf*  
4 2 3 1 2 3 ...

Mar. *p* *mf*  
4 2 3 1 2 3 ...

Vib.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Perc.

Perc.

Timp. *mf* *mf*

Synth.

The musical score consists of ten staves. The first two staves are for Xyl. and Mar. (two parts), both featuring triplet patterns. The Mar. parts include dynamic markings *p* and *mf*, and a fingering sequence 4 2 3 1 2 3 ... below the notes. The next two staves are for Vib. (two parts). The fifth staff is for E. Gtr., showing fret numbers 1, 3, 5 on strings T, A, and B. The sixth staff is for Bass, with fret numbers 10, 7, 0, 4, 0 on strings A and B. The seventh staff is for Dr., showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The eighth staff is for Perc., showing a pattern of eighth notes with accents. The ninth staff is for Timp., with dynamic markings *mf*. The tenth staff is for Synth., with various articulation marks and dynamic markings.

Sample transition?

57 58 59 60 61 62

Xyl.

Musical notation for Xyl. (Xylophone) showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62.

Mar.

Musical notation for Mar. (Maracas) showing triplet patterns and rhythmic notation across measures 57-62.

Mar.

Musical notation for Mar. (Maracas) showing triplet patterns and rhythmic notation across measures 57-62.

Sample transition?

Vib.

Musical notation for Vib. (Vibraphone) showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62.

Sample transition?

Vib.

Musical notation for Vib. (Vibraphone) showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62.

Sample transition?

E. Gtr.

Musical notation for E. Gtr. (Electric Guitar) showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62. Includes a TAB staff below with fret numbers: 5, 6, 1, 3.

Bass

Musical notation for Bass showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62. Includes a TAB staff below with fret numbers: 7, 7, 3, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 2.

Dr.

Musical notation for Dr. (Drum) showing rhythmic patterns across measures 57-62.

shake

Perc.

Musical notation for Perc. (Percussion) showing rhythmic patterns across measures 57-62. Includes a 'shake' instruction.

Timp.

Musical notation for Timp. (Timpani) showing notes across measures 57-62.

Synth.

Musical notation for Synth. (Synthesizer) showing notes with dynamics (p, v) and slurs across measures 57-62.

63

64

U

66

67  
xylo

Xyl.

Mar.

Mar.

Vib.

Vib.

E. Gtr.

TAB

Bass

TAB

Dr.

Perc.

Perc.

Timp.

Synth.



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