

## **Preparing the RYPE Audition**

by Peter Saleh, Director

Thanks for your interest in the Rutgers Youth Percussion Ensemble. This is to assist the preparation of anyone interested in auditioning for RYPE.

### **Why duets? Why not just solos like my region, all-state, or college audition?**

Solos are great to develop musicianship, technical skill, and confidence in performance. Your RYPE audition will still contain a solo on what you feel is your best instrument, be it snare drum, marimba, timpani, etc. As music in small groups (chamber music) requires all of the players to be tuned in to what is going on, though, a duet is a great way to see how your chops and musicianship translate into a cohesive ensemble performance (in other words, can you play well with others?).

There is no conductor in a duet, therefore you are provided with a score instead of parts so that you may be aware of what is going on in both parts at any given time; you and the second player are essentially sharing the responsibilities that conductors usually have. This is an important skill to have in percussion ensemble.

### **Set up for success:**

- Since there will be no conductor, position your music stand as low as possible so that you can see your instruments and your playing will be more precise.
- These pieces may be played from memory or read from the score.
- Ask your private teacher, band director, or a more experienced player for assistance.

### **#1: The Multi-Percussion Duet**

Playing along with a “taped” part is very common in chamber percussion. Much music has been written for percussion and tape and this duet is one way to get a taste of that style. It is also a way to play along with a dependable “player” that will be accurate every time.

### **About the piece:**

- It is written without any snare-specific technique, meaning that players who have more of a marimba and xylophone playing background won't need to develop snare drum rolls or advanced accent, double stroke, or flam techniques in order to play it.
- The audition etude has also been written for common drum set instruments found at any school. Because each part contain two surfaces, to work on the coordination, one may also practice on two practice pads or even two notes on a xylophone.
- You may practice along with headphones or earbuds but during the audition you will play along with the track through a loudspeaker.

### **Preparing your part:**

- Listen to each track a few times to get the general feel of the duet.
- Follow along in the score with the recording.
- Choose which part you would like to play. Understand that if you have chosen the tom part, you will be playing along to the snare/HH recording and vice versa.
- Sticking is up to you. If you have the skill to use double strokes and other relevant sticking patterns, you may do so, but it is advised that alternate sticking on faster passages be used in order to have the most control over your sound.
- *If playing the snare drum/hi-hat part:*
  - In order to avoid tangled arm positions, I suggest putting the hi-hat on the right and centered slightly in front of the snare drum.

- Position the snare drum a bit lower than you would normally do if you were playing concert snare drum alone in order to allow for freer side-to-side motion.
- Position a padded stick tray on your dominant side (most people's right) underneath your music stand with the brushes already opened and set to be picked up easily.
- Although the hi-hat pedal is not notated, the player will use it to execute open and closed notes.
- It will help the transition back to sticks at C if measure 28 is played one-handed, allowing the other hand to be free to help switch from brushes to sticks earlier.
- *If playing the tom-tom part:*
  - Two drums between 10"-14" in diameter and tuned about a third apart are ideal.
  - It is suggested to position the higher drum to the right.
  - Make sure both drums are set to the same height and angle (snare drum stands are good for this).
  - It is advised that swizzle sticks be used, otherwise the stick tray holding your mallets should be positioned in the same manner as the sd/hh player's.
  - When playing on the hoop, it is suggested that the shoulder of the stick be used.
  - Rolls may be single stroked, as on the recording, or they maybe be played with multiple bounce strokes (aka 'buzzes')
  - When playing the muted passages (marked by dots over the notes in mm 22-27), the hand doing the dampening should still be holding the second, unused stick.
  - It will help the transition back to sticks at C if measure 28 is performed with one hand, allowing the other hand to be free to help switch from mallets to sticks or to flip the swizzle sticks over earlier.

About the click track:

- In addition to serving as a metronome, it is there to aid your rhythm. In particular, measures 12-18 and beat 2 of measure 24 include subdivisions to guide your playing.
- The click track is also modified to assist in tempo transitions. Specifically, mm 7-11 (the 3/8 measures), the second half of m 19, and the first half of m 29 are setup so that the changes make more sense.

**#2: The Keyboard Duet: Handel's Fantasia No. 5 in D Minor**

- Listen to and watch piano performances by Franco Di Nitto and others on YouTube. Links to these are provided on the RYPE Facebook page.
- Make sure you know where middle "C" is on your instrument. On a marimba, it is always 3 octaves down from the highest note.
- For the audition, you will be sharing the marimba with another player so it will be important to position your music stand in the middle of the range of your part.
- Choose mallets that are appropriate for the range of marimba you are playing. Medium hard yarn mallets or medium unwound rubber mallets work well, for example.
- Phrasing and dynamics were added to the original score to should be performed in a musically appropriate way.