

AUDITION MATERIALS

CYMBALS

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ViP 2020 Cymbal Technique Packet

By: Garrett Louie, Randy Ritchey, Jenne Brauchle + Frank Jacobo

Introduction

This packet was made to help guide your understanding of the cymbal technique and sounds that will be used for the Vigilantes Indoor Percussion Cymbal Line. This is NOT the only technique to cymbals; there are many techniques and names to cymbals in the marching community, but it is the one that we find the best to use. Be aware that cymbals are musical instruments, and not just for visual. The best cymbal lines are the ones that can blend both music and visual together. We will be using various on and off-hand techniques; however do not forget that our sound is the most important factor.

Set Positions

Set positions are where we hold the cymbals while either standing at “set” or “attention”. There are many different positions that the players will use. This is the first thing people see in the lot or at performances. A line by their set positions can tell a lot. We want these to look the same at all times.

Set

This is the position you will be in when called to “set” by a staff member or section leader.



- In this position your arms will be controlled, but you will have to learn to remain relaxed.
- Cymbals should be vertical and resting just off the body.
- Hands should be open.
- Thumbs should be in line with side seam.
- Elbows should be back and will bend slightly.
- The shoulders should be relaxed.
- The cymbals must remain perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other.
- They must be straight and not angled if viewed by a spectator.
- Your cymbal straps should be comfortable and not extremely tight.
- We will use off-hand techniques often so try to have the strap more on the loose side than tight.
- You want your hand to take up as much space on the cymbal as you can and have your fingers spread out.



Gumption/Seatbelt/Mid-Port

Gumption will be the standard go to position when flipping up or playing. It can be considered the playing position. This is where we begin for push crashes, sizzles and various sounds.



- The cymbals should be directly in front of the torso.
- The knot of the cymbal should line up with your sternum.
- An easy way to think about the angle is to imagine putting on a seatbelt. The cymbal should go from the left shoulder to the right hip.
- The angle we use is a 25-degree angle.
- Your left hand should be straight, the same angle as your forearm. Your right hand should be angled upwards.
- Imagine you were clapping your hands together. That will help you figure out the hand angle.
- The cymbals should be separated with a two-finger distance and like our set position they should be perpendicular so that a spectator does not see the insides.
- Your forearms will stay parallel to the floor.
- You should attempt to have the cymbals as far out as you can from your body without locking your elbows. Your elbows should bend.

Hi-Hats

- Cymbals are placed together right on top of left.
- They are placed on your stomach just below the belly button.
- There will be a slight angle upwards from the left side of the cymbal (performer perspective)



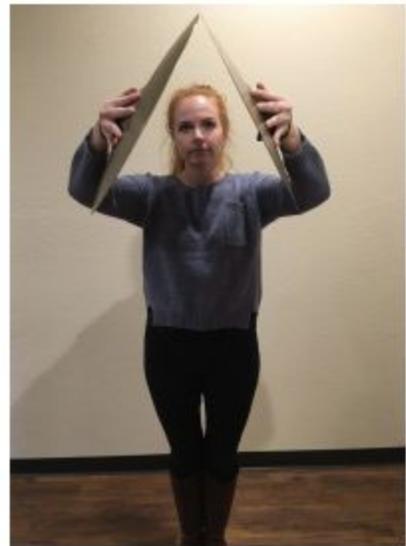


Vert

- Hold plates vertically
- Cymbals are evenly spaced with a 2-finger distance
- Keep your back straight
- Shoulders should be relaxed and rolled back
- Arms should be at a 90-degree angle
- Your thumbs should be at eye level

Vert Tap Position

- Same height level as our vert position.
- The bottom edge of your cymbals will be shoulder width.
- Imagine an “A” shape
- The cymbals will be even with each other
- Push with your pinkies to avoid showing the knots
- Be sure to stay physically relaxed.



Crash Technique

There are two basic crash techniques known as the push crash and the vert crash.

Push Crash

For push crashes, push crash chokes, and flat crashes we will begin with a prep that will start a quarter note beat before the crash. This prep requires the least amount of movement from other preps, so be sure not to over do it!

- Flex the bicep and widen space outwards between the cymbals moving at a 45-degree angle up and away from the knot on the left cymbal.
- Your right hand will be perpendicular from your left hand and will be angled upwards.
- This should feel as if you're doing a military salute.
- The front edge of the right cymbal should be facing the left cymbal.
- Your right elbow should be pointing downwards

The "Flam"

When crashing there will be a two-part process. I usually call it a flam, but there are other ways of calling the contact.

- The first part of the crash will be the contact that will be made with the front edge of the cymbal.
- It is usually known as the tap.
- This will start the vibrations needed to create a good crash quality sound.
- The second part will be the actual "crash".
- It will come from the backside of the cymbals.
- Your palms will come together and the back edges of the cymbals will make the contact needed to make the crash sound.

Be sure to take your fingers off during this check point



Combining Both Motions

- The attack should flow together in such a way that you do not hear two separate attacks.
- Think of it less as an attack and more as an approach that allows you to draw out the sound.
- The two strikes should happen in a rapid fashion, with the plates being nearly parallel followed by a quick release that pulls into the crash technique release method being utilized.
- The entirety of this process should be considered as one motion creating one sound.
- Avoid the dreaded air pocket or harsh pop sound! If heard, you are doing something incorrectly. Refer back to the "Push Crash" and "Flam" paragraphs above.



The Follow Through

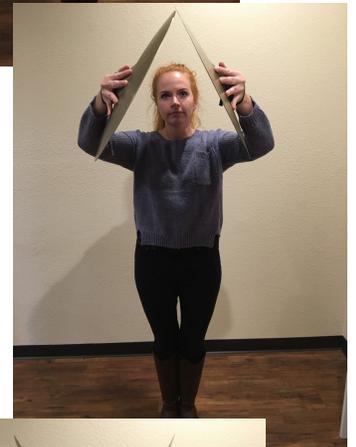
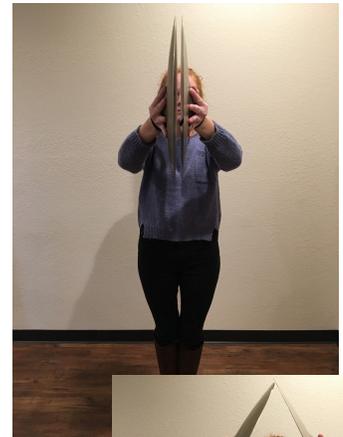
- After your crash the right arm will be pushed forward and will be fully extended.
- The cymbal will be the same angle and our gumption/midport.
- The right hand will either be extended one or two counts depending on the tempo and note duration.
- The hand will come back and you will be back at gumption/midport.

Push Crash Counting Structure

If the crash is on beat one, then your prep will be on count four of the previous measure. Crash on count one and bring back on count two or three depending on what you are assigned.

Vert Crash

1. **Set Position:** The set position for a vert crash is our vert position.
2. **The “A”:**
 - Begin at vertical set position
 - Pull bottom of the plates out so they become perpendicular
 - Acute angle to each other.
 - Form an A.
3. **The “V”:**
 - Reverse the A step so that the tops are now out.
 - Prepare for the bottom contact
 - Both cymbals should remain even
 - Form a V.
4. **Bottom Contact:**
 - Move the cymbals horizontally inward from the V step so that the bottoms of the plates make contact.
 - The right cymbal should be about 1.5 inches in from the edge of the cymbal.
5. **Top Contact:**
 - Hinge the V angle to close.
 - If you look on the left side of the angle, you should see a crescent peeking out which is where air escapes, preventing an air pocket.
6. **Return to the A Shape:**
 - You will flow back to the A shape.
7. **Return to the V Shape & Close:**
 - Continue to V and then return to set.
 - Maintain pressure with your fingers on the “nose” or front of the cymbals so they do not flare out.



AV Crash Counting Structure

(3) A --- (4) V --- (1) Crash --- (&) A --- (3) V --- (4) Set & Finger Pressure

Things to consider

- Be sure that the center of the cymbals stays at eye level and the movement only is in a horizontal direction.
- Avoid flashing out by utilizing your back fingers to push inward on the “nose”.
- Separating the bottom and top contact prevents an air pocket from occurring.
- When crashing, the two steps are condensed to a “flam” between the bottom and top.

Crash Chokes

Crash chokes have the same technique as a normal gumption/midport crash. The flam approach and attack are the same. Think of the first part as a normal crash. However, as soon as the crash or “flam” attack happens the cymbals should be muted or choked as soon as possible.



- It is important to cover as much surface area of the cymbals with your arms and body as possible to stop the cymbals from vibrating and making sound.
- The choke set position is resting your cymbals against your body with the tips angled toward each other in with a 2-finger distance apart.
- The top of the cymbal should touch the side of your pectoral muscles and the bottom the side of your stomach/hip area.
- After the “choke” the cymbals should be pushed back out to mid-port or vert on the count and position it was assigned.

Do not forget: The most important part of the choke is the crash. Do not mess up the technique or get an air pocket because you're thinking too much about the muting part.

Taps

The set position for the tap is our vert tap position as mentioned before.

The prep for a tap is usually either a beat or an upbeat before the actual attack.

- The left cymbal does not move during the prep or attack.
- The wrist serves as a hinge and your fingers can be used to vary the force exerted.

The height of the tap and force you exert will determine the dynamic of the tap.

- The plane of the right cymbal should contact the edge of the left cymbal about one inch inside the edge. You should hear a short burst of sound followed by a dissipating resonance. The cymbals should go back to the vert tap position after the tap.

The timbre of the tap is determined by the position of the tap.

- The closer to the edge you play the tap the brighter the sound. The closer to the bell the deeper or lower sound you get.
- The tap makes a “ting” or “tong” sound.

There should not be any contact made with your body or arms during this.

Note: Taps can also be played on your body or in a low/gumption position.

Tap Chokes/Punch

A tap choke is a bright staccato sounding choke effect.

- They are played from gumption/mid-port or vert at a vert tap position usually, however recent visuals have tap chokes played from various positions using various techniques.

For a body or low tap choke, bring the cymbals away from the body.

- The cymbals should make an A shape if you look down for the set position of a gumption/mid tap choke. Think of the cymbals aligning with your feet at second position when prepping out for the tap.
- Play a tap and then bring the cymbals back against the body to our choke position.
- Push back out to the assigned position after choking on the assigned count.

To get the best sound: the tap must happen before any movement to choke the cymbals occurs.

- Try not to tap and move at the same time.
- It's important to relax both hands during contact.
- If you do not remain physically relaxed, you are more likely to get a harsh sound.
- This could mean that you're too tense or you're slamming the cymbals together too hard.



Sizz

Sizzles are the longest, sustainable sound made when the cymbals make contact.

- They are played at various positions.
- To perform a sizzle, make contact with both cymbals together.
- The right cymbals will be slightly offset. The cymbals should be making constant contact.
- Be sure to take off your fingers during this.
- The sizz needs to remain loose so the cymbals can slightly vibrate.
- If done correctly you will hear a sound that is similar to the name.

Sizz-Suck/ Fusion

Sizz-sucks are used to make an open-closed version of a drum set hi-hat.

- They turn the vacuum pressure of the cymbals into a short suction sound.
- There are various positions to play sizz-sucks at.
- When performed correctly, the cymbals should create a vacuum, and be stuck together for a moment.
- I find it easier to perform the suck sound by after pushing out the sizz, you use your fingers and push the edges of the cymbals together with force so that you can achieve the suck sound easier.

Tong/ Bell Tap

Bell taps are used to get a lower/deeper sound from the cymbal.



- The sound is similar to a bell being struck with the shoulder of a drumset stick.
- Bell taps can be played at any position.
- A bell tap at gumption/ mid-port will require you to open your right cymbal, therefore making it perpendicular to your left cymbal.
- You can imagine your right hand is about to karate chop your left cymbal.
- To play a bell tap, the edge of the right cymbal will hit the inside of the bell of the left cymbal.

Zings

Zings involve pushing the edge of the right cymbal along the inside of the left cymbal from outside of the bell to the edge.

- The sound will be created as a result of the edge of the cymbal scraping against the rings or bumps of the cymbals, which are known as striations/tone rings.
- Zings need strong pressure at the initiation and a relaxed hand for the release/push.
- Be sure to keep constant contact with the cymbals during the push motion of a zing.

Crunch/Press

Crunches or presses are played at our mid-port position or at our vert position.

- Crunches make the same sound as a hi-hat.
- They are approached the same way as well.
- The difference is a crunch will not touch your body.
- It will stay in a set position and will be pressed together with pressure from your hands and arms to get a louder sound than a hi-hat.

How to Tie Cymbal Strap Knots

We use nylon cymbal straps from StrapWorks. We make the straps long enough to double-knot, and tape into square blocks.

