

Virginia Band & Orchestra Directors Association

All-Virginia Percussion Audition Procedure

The following information is for percussionists auditioning for All-Virginia Band & Orchestra. This is in addition to (not in place of) the information for all students auditioning for All-Virginia Band & Orchestra.

All percussionists will audition on Snare Drum, Mallets, and Timpani. You will rotate through a total of four rooms for the audition process as described below.

Students may not speak during the audition. Any questions by the student must take place between the student and the guide outside the audition room. Students are subject to disqualification for speaking during the audition.

Room #1 – Snare Rudiments, Rolls & Sight-reading

A snare drum will be provided (you may use your own snare drum). Sticks and mallets will **not** be provided. Set up quickly!

You will be asked to play the long roll then the concert roll.

Long Roll (Rudiment #1 from the PAS Standard 26 Rudiments) – **30 second time limit*** open-closed-open

Concert Roll (closed or “buzz”) – sustained sound from pp-ff-pp – **15 second time limit***

You will be asked to play two rudiments (from the PAS Standard 26 Rudiments) – open-closed.

*Both of these rudiments will have a **15 second time limit***.

After completing the second rudiment, you will turn over the sight-reading and have thirty seconds to study.

After the thirty second time limit, you will be asked to perform the sight-reading.

After completing the sight-reading, quickly gather your personal items and proceed to the next room.

Room #2 – Percussion Prepared Selection

The following items will be provided:

A standard three and one-half (3.5) octave xylophone (F to C).

A set of four timpani, which will already be tuned to the correct pitches.

A snare drum & trap table (or you may use your own snare drum).

You must provide your own sticks and mallets.

You will have no more than 15 seconds to set up for your prepared performance.

After completing the prepared selection, quickly gather your personal items and proceed to the next room.

***Students will drop off snare drums at a secure location between Rooms 2 and 3 and pick them up at the conclusion of their audition.**

Room #3 – Timpani Sight-reading

A set of four timpani will be provided – you will need your own timpani mallets.

The following pitch sources may be used for tuning: a pitch pipe, tuning fork, or mallet instrument.

You will have 45 seconds to study the sight-reading and tune the timpani to the appropriate pitches.

After the time limit, you will be asked to play the pitches on each drum from lowest to highest.

After playing the pitches, you will be asked to perform the sight-reading.


After completing the sight-reading, quickly gather your personal items and proceed to the next room.

Room #4 – Mallets Scales & Sight-reading

A standard three and one-half (3.5) octave xylophone (F to C).

You will need to supply appropriate mallets (hard rubber, string wound, etc. – NOT hard plastic or metal).

You will be given a tempo (quarter = 160), and asked to play one major scale, **two octaves only***. Starting pitch will be the lowest note of that scale on the provided 3.5 octave xylophone.

The following rhythm will be used for major scales, both ascending and descending: 

The process will be repeated for a second major scale, **two octaves only***.

You will then be given a tempo (quarter = 144 minimum), and asked to play the chromatic scale, **three octaves only***. The chromatic scale should be played in sixteenth notes, re-attacking the top note before descending. The chromatic scale will be the “C” chromatic scale, starting on the lowest “C” of the instrument.

After completing the chromatic scale, you will be given 30 seconds to study the sight-reading.

After the thirty second time limit, you will be asked to perform the sight-reading.

After completing the sight-reading, quickly gather your personal items. You have completed your audition.

***Students who exceed the time limit on rudiments or the octave limit on scales will be cut off by the judges. Students will be assessed on the material performed within the time limit.**