**Introduction**

The information presented in this packet is designed to prepare you for success throughout the fall and winter seasons. Please feel free to contact the staff if you have any questions.

You will see BUWPE (Boston University Winter Percussion Ensemble) used exclusively throughout this packet. The BUWPE is a nationally-competitive percussion ensemble in the WGI circuit, and is comprised of the same percussion members in the BU Marching Band. We teach our technique throughout the fall Marching Band season and then segue seamlessly into the BUWPE season, where we hit the ground running. The expectations and techniques implemented during the Fall Marching Band season are the very same expectations and techniques implemented by the Winter Percussion Ensemble. This creates one consistent approach starting in August and continuing through April, which allows us to compete at a high level of excellence! It is our hope that your participation in this percussion ensemble will begin in August and continue through April.

**Expectations**

All persons auditioning for the BUWPE will be evaluated in the following areas. We will discuss each area in depth during Band Camp.

**Attitude/Commitment**
- How much does the performer want to be part of the BUWPE? It is very important that each member buy into what they, as an individual, can bring to the ensemble. We like to see members that take ownership and pride in what they do, thus making the BUWPE an ensemble that everyone wants to be a part of.
- Strength of Character!
- Confidence
- Commitment to Attendance

**Mental Approach**
- How well does the performer listen, absorb and apply information given to them?
- Is the performer flexible with respect to style, approach, and technique?
- How quickly, efficiently and accurately does the performer learn the music given to them?

**Music Preparedness**
- How well is music prepared?
  - Does the performer know all rehearsal marks and bar numbers?
  - Does the performer know the written dynamics?
  - Can the performer demonstrate the written dynamics?
  - Can the performer demonstrate passages applying proper technique?
  - Can the performer play passages without breaking?

**Marching** (Does not apply to members of the Front Ensemble)
- Ability to apply marching technique? (Technique will be taught by the staff at Band Camp)
- How well does the performer march or mark time while playing rhythms (simple to complex) or musical passages?

**Performance Evaluation Examples**
- Sound Quality & Volume
- Timing & Tempo Control
- Can the performer play together with the ensemble?
- Endurance (mental and physical)
Greetings!

The techniques contained on the following pages are typically known as the "East Coast" or "Flow" techniques, though I have described a few "West Coast" or "Lock" techniques (e.g. the Flat Crash). These techniques were taught to me by Steve Regener, cymbal technician for The Bluecoats, Reading Buccaneers, Aftermath and United indoor percussion ensembles, among others. These, in turn, are variations from Thom Hannum's marching cymbal thesis at The University of Massachusetts.

Set position is defined as cymbals at sides, knots perfectly straight. This should be a relaxed position with no strain. Chin should be slightly higher than level. There may be variations on this depending on the situation or "look" of the programming.

There are a number of different techniques that produce sound. The term "crash" refers to any technique that produces sound. The techniques are listed on the following pages.
**Vertical Crash**

**Set Position:**
Hold plates vertically, about an inch and a half apart where the knots of the plates are at eye level, and forearms are slightly less than 90 deg. from each other. Plates should be about 2 to 3 inches away from your face.

**The Crash:**
This crash has seven steps to it:

1. **A** - pull bottom of the plates out, so that they become perpendicular (90 deg.) to each other, forming an A.

2. **V** - reverse the A step, so that the tops are now out. Preparing for the bottom contact, your right handed cymbal should be about an inch above your left.

3. **Bottom Contact (BC)** - simply move the cymbals horizontally inward from the V step so that the bottoms of the plates contact. *ting!* The right cymbal should be about 1.5 inches in from the edge of the cymbal.

4. **Top Contact (TC)** - hinge the V system closed. *crunch!* If you look on the left side of the system, you should see a crescent peeking out which is where air escapes, preventing that nasty air pocket.

5. **A** - return to the A step described above

6. **V** - continue to V step described above

(7.) Return to set.

**Things to watch:**

- Be sure that the center of cymbals stays at eye level, i.e. movement is only in the horizontal direction. (This excludes the inch lee-way for the V-step)

- Don't show your knots. Knots are ugly, and it looks like you have more control over the cymbals if you don't. This'll feel like you're pushing the front of the cymbals in with your fingers.

- Your forearms should never be touching the cymbals, especially in the A-step. This means elbows out!

- Make sure your bottom contact is as close as possible to the bottom of the plates. If you contact slightly foreword or behind the bottom, you'll "roll" the crash and lose sound quality.
• Note that these are check points of the actual crash to make a cymbal line look uniform; all motion should be fluid between steps. Also, be sure to play through the cymbals when actually crashing. You'll lose power if you think too much about getting back to the A step.

• The goal of separating the bottom and top contact (as mention briefly above) is to prevent an air pocket. When actually crashing, the two steps are condensed to a "flam" between the bottom and top.

* Note: This is the hardest crash to master. Obviously by my lengthy description there’s always something on which to work. Don't worry if you don't get it perfect right away, it can take months to master. Once the basics of this crash are learned, you can apply them to the rest of the crash techniques. You'll know you've made a good crash sound when you hear beautiful warm lower pitched undertones of the cymbals, and the plates resonate in your hands.

**Vertical Choke** or **Crash Choke**

**Set Position:**
Same as Vertical Crash; Plates are vertical, about 1.5 inches apart, knots at eye level.

**The Crash:**
Begin with a prep & crash similar to the Vertical Crash, with A, V, then Bottom & Top Contact. Immediately after top contact, push with your fingers so that the plates are muted by your forearms, and bring the plates into your armpits so that they form a flat A, a little bit more open than 90 deg. The tops of the plates should be around chin level (depending on your height), and less than an inch apart.

**Things to Watch:**

• The most important part of the choke is the crash. Don't botch up the bottom or top contact, or get an air pocket, because you're thinking too hard about choking off the sound.

• Make sure to mute the sound (virtually) entirely with your forearms. If you don't it'll sting in your armpits as the skin gets jolted, and you'll end up with some sweet bruises.

• The contact point between the plates and your body should always be the in the crook of your armpit. It may be difficult to do this accurately (especially when repeating chokes rapidly), but again, you'll end up with some pretty purple/yellow blobs on your chest and/or arms if you aren't consistent.
**Horizontal Crash**

**Set Position:**
Here, set position is such that the center of the bottom cymbal (left cymbal) is level with/directly in front of your left hip at an angle. It's a matter of preference, but the angle I like is 45°. The right cymbal is positioned directly on top of, and parallel to the left, about an inch above. Both plates should be about 2 inches away from your hip. The knots of the plates should be fixed on a line perpendicular to the 45° plane made by the cymbals.

**The Crash:**
This crash has seven steps, beginning with the prep:

A - pull right cymbal up to horizontal, at about shoulder level. The left arm barely moves downward, but the wrist will turn (as though opening a doorknob) so that the plate is slightly past vertical. The "tops" will end up about 7 inches apart.

V - the left cymbal rotates back to a little past set position, while the right rotates back near the left. The right should be about an inch above the left, the bottom in a bit so, that the plate is slightly "past" vertical.

BC - bring the cymbals together by dropping the right cymbal onto the left, making contact the usual 1.5 inches in from the edge of the left. *ting!*

TC - Hinge the system closed "crunch!" so that the cymbals are in front of your left hip, as though you've closed set position. Remember, if you could bend over that way and look under the plates, you'd see that crescent shape which lets out air.

A - return to A step described above

V - move to V step described above

7. Return to set.

**Things to watch:**

- Make sure the crash point is in front of your left hip, not near the center of your body. Same goes for returning to set, think about pushing your cymbals down and to the left. It's an entirely unnatural position that takes a while to get used to.

- Similar to the V. Crash, make sure all movement is along that line perpendicular to the plane generated by the cymbals at set.

- Keep your wrists parallel to forearms. If you weren't wearing the cymbals, it would look like you're clapping.

- Don't show your knots. Knots are ugly, and it looks like you have more
control over the cymbals if you don't. This'll feel like you're pushing the front of the cymbals in with your fingers.

- Your forearms should never be touching the cymbals, especially in the A-step. This means elbows out!

- Make sure your bottom contact is as close as possible to the bottom of the plates. If you contact slightly foreword or behind the bottom, you'll "roll" the crash and lose sound quality. If you want to get scientific about the angles, you could say the "bottom" of the cymbals in this case is along the line orthogonal to both the plane of the plates and the line of movement.

- Note that these are check points of the actual crash to make a cymbal line look uniform; all motion should be fluid between steps. Also, be sure to play through the cymbals when actually crashing. You'll lose power if you think too much about getting back to the A step.

- The goal of separating the bottom and top contact (as mention briefly above) is to prevent an air pocket. When actually crashing, the two steps are condensed to a "flam" between the bottom and top.

**Horizontal Choke**

**Set Position:**
Same as Horizontal Crash; plates are centered in front of your left hip at 45°; 1.5 inches apart.

**The Crash:**
Perform the normal Horizontal Crash A, V, Bottom and Top contact. Immediately after the crash, push with fingers so that the sound is muted against your forearms. In addition, bring the right cymbal back to a shoulder height horizontal against your chest (kind of in your armpit), while bringing the left plate back so that it vertically rests on your left hip. The bell of the cymbal should be directly aligned with your hip, so that the bottom and top of the plates are in contact with your side. All in all, the cymbals should form a right angle with respect to each other.

**Things to Watch:**

- The most important part of the choke is the crash. Don't botch up the bottom or top contact, or get an air pocket, because you're thinking too hard about choking off the sound.

- Make sure to mute the sound (virtually) entirely with your forearms. If you don't it'll sting in your chest and hip as the skin gets jolted, and you'll end up with some sweet bruises.
**Flat Crash**

**Set Position:**
Set position is similar to that of a Horizontal Crash, but in the center of the body. Looking in a mirror, your top (right) hand should be dead center on the torso. Cymbals are tilted a little more then 45°, (about 60°) and 1.5 inches apart.

**The Crash:**
There are four steps to this crash:

- **Prep** - With the left cymbal, simply push with fingers so that cymbal gets pressed against your forearm. The rest of the left arm doesn't move. The right cymbal is brought back as though you were starting a lawn mower, so that the plate is by your ear, again pushing with your fingers so that it touches your forearm. As a result of this motion, the upper part of the (right) arm should be a little past horizontal. The right cymbal should fit into your bicep. The top contact for this crash will be halfway between the edge of the cymbal and bell, so you want to "aim" your (straight) right forearm towards that spot on the left plate.

- **Front Contact (FC)** - As mentioned in the previous step, you're ready "aimed" toward the contact point, so simply push the right arm forward to make contact with left plate. *ting!* the left cymbal does not move in this step.

- **Crash** - Relax left fingers, so that cymbals smash together "flat," as in a closed set. Though this is the flat crash, the whole system remains at the 60° during the crash (& set) phase. Follow, or push through with the crash by extending your right arm out fully. Your left hand will "flatten," and pull towards your chest a bit. At the end of the crash the cymbals should be very nearly touching (they shouldn't sizzle though).

4. Return to set.

**Things to Watch:**

- This crash is meant to be a very aggressive crash, thus all movements must be sharp.

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**Flat Choke**

**Set Position:**
Same as the Flat Crash; plates are at a 60° angle, 1.5 inches apart; with the right cymbal in the dead center of the torso.

**The Crash:** Begin with the prep and crash of the Flat Crash. After the follow through, rather, more as a continuation of the follow-through twist the whole system clockwise (to the right, toward vertical) and pull the plates back to the sides.
of your body. The choke ends up looking like a plow with the fronts of the plates nearly together. For consistency with Clunks and Clanks (described later) the left cymbal should be about 1.5 inches inside (i.e. closer to your chest) than the right, but not touching. The bells of the plates are at navel-level.

**Things to Watch:**
- This crash is meant to be a very aggressive crash, thus all movements must be sharp.

**FP Crash**

**Set Position:**
Set position is the same as the Horizontal Crash; plates are centered in front of your left hip at 45°, 1.5 inches apart.

**The Crash:**
This crash is almost the same as a Horizontal Crash, but with a different release. Here are the five steps:

- **A** - the same A as the Hoz. crash, though minimized a bit. The right arm doesn't go quite horizontal, the left not as vertical, and the distance between the cymbals is about 4, instead of 7 inches.
- **V** - as the A is not as large, the V is also smaller, but otherwise the same as a Horizontal Crash.
- **TC/BC** - same as Horizontal Crash.
- **Release** - Immediately after the crash, the right cymbal is brought horizontal, level with the navel so it "hangs" from your hand. The plate should be 2 inches from body, and the bell should be in front of your right hip. The left cymbal "moves" to its original set position in front of the left hip at 45°, against your body at "hip rest".

5. Return to Set

**Effect Crashes**

**Hi-Hats**

**Set Position:**
Cymbals are placed (right on top, left on bottom) together, perfectly horizontal up against the stomach, and just above the navel.

**The Crash:**
The prep for the crash is done as though the plates were hinged at the contact point with the stomach, with only the top (right) plate making any movement. When
"opening" the Hi-Hats a good standard height to make a decent sound is 6 inches. Then, simply drop the right onto the left, using fingers for control.

**Things to Watch:**

- The crash should sound like a "chump." To achieve this instead of a big air-pocketed "THUMP," closed Hi-Hats should be end up slightly off-set (as opposed to perfectly on top of each other) to let some air out.
- Use your fingers for control. For slowly repeating, or single instance Hi-Hats, press with your fingers to achieve a good tight sound. For faster repetition, be sure to relax, and think of the plate as an extension of your hand.

**Vertical Hi-Hats**

**Set Position:**
Similar to the Hi-Hat, but the cymbals are oriented vertically. Contact point with the stomach is the same, maybe a little higher, i.e. just under the sternum.

**The Crash:** The prep still hinges at the back, but both cymbals move an equidistant 3 inches. Again, to crash, just "close" the Hi-Hats. Same as the Hi-Hats, this crash makes a "chump" sound.

**Klunk**

**Set Position:**
Plates are at your sides, with the bell at about navel level (this can be adjusted). The front of the cymbals are angled in, so they form a 90 deg angle, with the left plate slightly (1.5 in from the edge) inside the right, not touching.

**The Crash:**
To perform the crash, simply hinge the right cymbal on your side, swinging a little out, and then in to make contact with the left. The plates should always stay in contact with your body, and the left hand never moves. The prep, like the tap, is minimal but it depends on the volume you want from the klunk. This crash sounds like a "klunk."

**Things to Watch:**

- Like the Tap (described later) return to set as quickly as possible without jiggling the cymbals around.
**Klank**

**Set Position:**
Set position is the same as the Klunk: Plates are at your sides, with the bell at about navel level. The fronts of the cymbals are angled in, so they form a 90 deg angle, with the left plate slightly inside the right, not touching.

**The Crash:**
This crash is the similar to the Klunk but allowing the cymbals to ring. Now, along with hinging outward for the prep, move both cymbals away from the body straight out about 6 inches; only horizontally forward, no vertical motion (holding the same 90 deg plate angle throughout). Make contact at this point, as though it were a Tap, of course making sure not to mute any sound with your forearms. Then, bring the system back into set immediately to choke off the sound.

**Things to Watch:**
- Here, like the Tap and Klunk, the left plate serves only as a contact surface and doesn't move other than the outward motion.
- The crash sounds like a "klank." In order achieve the best sound quality, it's important to relax both hands during contact. If not, you'll get a more klunky sound. It probably also means you're too tense, and slamming the plates together, which you need not do.
- Remember to keep all motion fluid between the prep, contact, and choke.

**HOAC** (Horizontal Open Attack Choke)

**Set Position:**
Set for the HOAC is similar to a Hi-Hat in that the plates are perfectly horizontal, but they're two inches from the body, and separated about 1.5 inches.

**The Crash:**
The crash is just forcing the cymbals together from there, making a tight, soft-but-punchy sound.

**Crunch** or (Vertical Open Attack Choke)

**Set Position:**
Here, set position is the same as a vertical crash, bells at eye level plates 1.5 inches apart.

**The Crash:**
Just as the HOAC, the crash is just using brunt force to push the plates together, making the characteristic crunchy sound.
**Tap**

**Set Position:**
Set position for the tap is to have the left cymbal at Vertical Crash set position, and the right moves from Vertical Crash set up, and rotated counter-clockwise to an exactly 45 deg angle. Thus, the top of the right cymbal is hovering about an inch above the left, about an inch past the edge of the left. Make sure to keep your right plate perpendicular to the plane of your body, so you don't show your knots. An alternate set has the plates at 90 deg to each other (instead of 45), ala the A step of the Vertical Crash. The right cymbal will still be above the left, about an inch apart.

**The Crash:**
The crash is just swinging the right cymbal (slightly) up, and hitting it down on the edge of the left. The left plate does not move for this crash. Here, your wrist serves as the hinge, (think legatos with a drumstick) using your fingers as the controlling power. For the "release," make sure the right cymbal returns to its set position quickly, without flopping around.

**Things to Watch:**
- The crash makes a "ting" or "tong" sound. Both cymbals should ring, so make sure that the right forearm does not make contact with its plate (elbow out!).
- You can change the timbre of this crash by varying the contact position with the inside of the right plate: closer to the edge of the (right) cymbal means more "ting," closer to the bell means more "tong."

**Slide Choke**

**Set Position:**
A slide has the same set and prep as a Hi-Hat: plates perfectly horizontal just above the navel, with the right resting on the left.

**The Crash:**
Begin the crash as a Hi-Hat. However, when the right cymbal comes down to make contact, bring the left cymbal out a bit (not more than an inch), and extend the right arm straight out in front of you fully. The cymbals should continue to touch each other (but not tightly) after the crash so that they sizzle.
When bringing the plates back to Hi-Hat, lightly push with the heel of the hand so the back of top plate slides along the inside of the bottom. As you bring the right cymbal in, you'll begin to generate suction, which cuts of the sound, and then bring the plates back to set. All said and done, the crash should sound like "Pssssshhhhhhhhoop."
Sizzle

Set Position:
Set position is that of a Horizontal Crash.

The Crash:
Though it depends on the duration and volume you want the sizzle to be, the prep
for a sizzle is similar to the smaller AV prep. However, in this crash the bottom
contact point is your left about an inch inside the right. This prevents the sound
cut-off while performing the release.
For the release, instead of moving the plates away from each other leave them in
slight contact so that they sizzle (be gentle!). As the sizzle progresses, drag the top
(right hand) plate slowly across the bottom one, which remains in set. The top plate
should drag showing from a 1.5 inch crescent to the entire top half of the left plate,
making sure not to expose the knots. The movement should be along that line
that's parallel with the plane created by the plates, and with the front of your body
(i.e. down at a shallow 45 degrees and towards your right).
Finally, bring the top plate back up to the set position.

Suc

Set Position:
Set for this crash is different from most others. Bring the cymbals up to Vertical
Crash position. Then bring the left plate down and in, nooked in the center of your
chest, so that the top is at eye level, and about 1 inch from your chin. The right
plate is touching the left, with the arm fully extended, at a 45 deg angle (looking at
a profile of you).

The Crash:
To achieve the crash, pull the right in toward along the 45° angle, creating the
same suction as in a Slide. The left plate moves out/up in the 45° just a little bit, so
that the closed Suc position has the top of the plates about an inch above eye level.
Remember, getting a good sound requires pushing with the heel of your hand.
You'll get a sound similar to the "shoop" part of the Slide Choke.

Kruant

Set Position:
For set, the left cymbal is the same as for a Horizontal Crash, level with the left hip,
at 45°. The right cymbal is above the left and perpendicular to the left so that the
bottom of the right plate is 2 to 3 inches above the left, "aiming" just below the knot
inside the bell. From the front, the system looks like a tipped over, upside-down T.
Angle the plates as to not show your knots to someone standing right in front of
you.
This crash has four steps:

Prep - move the right plate up and to the right (along the same line that the cymbal creates) so that it ends up about 6 inches above the left.

Contact - Bring the cymbal down and to the left, making contact with the bell of the left plate. The point of contact is slightly below direct center, just so you don't hit the knot.

Release - Bring the right plate up again to 6 inches, like the prep.

4. Return to set.

This crash sounds like a "gong."

Things to Watch:

- Don’t move your left cymbal at all. The natural tendency is to move it up and to the right to meet the right. Just like the Horizontal Crash, always think about pushing the left cymbal down, so that the contact point doesn't drift up towards the center of your body.

Zischen

Set Position:
Similar to the Tap, the left plate of Zischen set is the same as a Vertical Crash. The right plate is the same 45 deg angle as the Tap, but the tip/top of cymbal is now "inside" the left, slightly above the bell, a half-inch away. Again, there shouldn't be any forearm contact, see keep elbows out.

The Crash:
Keeping the left plate stationary throughout the crash, scrape the right plate into and up against left. Continue to scrape the right off the left cymbal, until it is 1.5 inches above the left. Forcefully return to set. Make sure that the right plate stays at the same 45° angle throughout the crash, and as usual don't show your knots.

Miscellaneous Information

All aerial crashes ("sprays", “funky's”) will be defined as the season progresses.

Remember that proper visual presence (posture, marching technique, etc., as defined by the drumline visual staff) is to be maintained at all times.

Contributing to the sound of the overall percussion ensemble is paramount; any and all extraneous visual contribution of the cymbal line (and all of the subsections of the field percussion ensemble) is secondary to that.