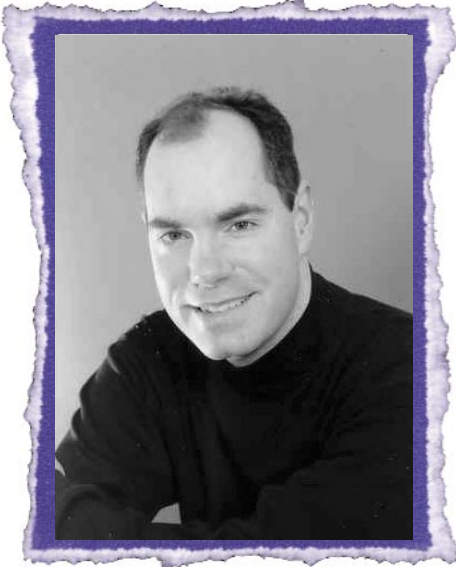




YAMAHA

Educator Series

PERCUSSION



Patrick Roulet

Patrick Roulet, a native of Virginia, has distinguished himself as a leading percussion educator, performer, and clinician in the Northwest. Since 1994, he has directed the percussion program at Western Washington University. Patrick holds the doctor of musical arts degree in percussion performance from the University of Washington and bachelors and masters degrees from the University of Michigan and Boston University. His concert credits include performances with the Seattle Symphony, the Seattle Opera Orchestra, the American Sinfonietta, and the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra. Dr. Roulet has served as President of the Washington State chapter of the Percussive Arts Society, is a Yamaha Performing Artist and a member of the Vic Firth Collegiate Educator Program.

Percussion Organization:

Where's the Beater?

By Patrick Roulet

Unlike many musicians in the band or orchestra, percussionists are usually required to use instruments provided by the school. Without proper guidance, it is easy to have neglected or abused instruments or even worse, to have deliberate theft or vandalism of the equipment. In order for a school to have a first-rate percussion program, it is essential that the students have decent, quality instruments in good working condition, a variety of sticks and mallets, and enough storage space for the instruments and mallets to be kept when they are not being used.

There are several steps a director can take to organize the percussion section. First, do a complete inventory of instruments, hardware, and mallets. Determine what needs to be repaired, replaced, or thrown away. Ask yourself if the cost of repairing the instrument is warranted, or if replacing it would be more economical. Salvage anything you think you may need at a later date, especially if it would be difficult to replace.

Pairs of sticks and mallets that are incomplete should be replaced. Worn out timpani and yarn-wound marimba mallets can be recovered, so separate them to be repaired, and do not throw them away.

Secondly, take stock of your storage area. Do you have enough closet and cabinet space to adequately stow the instruments and sticks that you have? If not, you should come up with ways to increase your storage space. Perhaps there is a parent volunteer or maybe a student in wood shop who could build a cabinet, or install some shelves for you.

Determine what equipment you will be using on a regular basis and store it in the most easily accessible place. The instruments that are used less often should be stored in a less accessible place.

Students should not have to search through a cabinet of rarely used instruments to find a triangle and beater. You may also decide to organize your storage space according to the season of the year; marching equipment is kept conveniently stored during marching and parade season, but stowed away during concert season.

Design a system for storing the small instruments and mallets in the storage cabinet. Use labels to mark the cabinet. An unstructured storage cabinet makes it difficult for students to find the instrument or mallet that they need. This chaos can contribute to a lax attitude in the students' approach to percussion playing and equipment usage. For increased security, you may also decide to put a padlock on the cabinet.

In addition to the instrument storage cabinet, a director should have a cabinet or toolbox with essential tools, repair supplies, and replacement parts. A portable toolbox works best for repair supplies for marching equipment since repairs will most likely need to be done on the field.



Patrick Roulet

While each student should own a pair of drumsticks, the director may need to purchase timpani and keyboard percussion mallets for the students to use. I suggest these sticks be kept in the director's office in a stick case or mallet bag. These items are the most portable and can "disappear" easily. You can assign the percussion section leader the task of returning the mallets to the office after each rehearsal.

I also recommend that you have covers made or purchased for all the keyboard instruments and timpani. The covers help keep unwanted dust, dirt, and hands from damaging the equipment.

Most importantly, establish a sense of pride, responsibility, and teamwork among the percussionists. Each spring have the percussionists clean the instruments, replace drumheads and take an inventory. Make it a party and an end of the year ritual. If they take an active role in the organization and maintenance of the instruments, they most likely will be more responsible with them. This is essential since the director cannot single-handedly implement these ideas without the support and help of the percussion students.

More Information:

Band Directors Percussion Repair Manual by Ed Brown

Mallet Repair by Arthur Press

Teaching Percussion by Gary Cook

Percussion Repair and Maintenance: A Performer's Technical Manual by Mark P. Bonfoey; edited by Anthony J. Cirone

Yamaha Corporation of America • Band & Orchestral Division
3445 East Paris Ave., SE • P.O. Box 899 • Grand Rapids, MI 49518-0899
www.yamahapercussion.com

